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THE
ART of DYING WELL.

In Two BOOKS

Written originally in *LATIN*

By CARDINAL *Bellarmin.*

Now Translated into *ENGLISH*
by JOHN BALL, late Lecturer of
St. Bartholomew's the Less, London.

With an ADDITION of Prayers
Suited to the Subject of each Chapter.

Publish'd for the Benefit of the TRANSLATOR.

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change, 1720.

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ART DYING WELL.

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WITNESSE my hand and seal this 15th day of June 1864.

BY CARDINAL BELLEMIN.

The logo of the British Museum, featuring a shield with the text "MUSEUM BRITANNICUM" inside.

With an ADDITION of Prayers
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Published for the Board of the Translator.

J. O. M. D. V.

The Book may be had at Mr. Collier's, 7, Paternoster Row, London.



T H E
P R E F A C E
O F
The AUTHOR.

Reflecting with myself, at my
Usual Seat of Retreat, (Where,
being Discharg'd from Publick
Affairs, I am more at Leisure
to Retire into myself) What should be the
Reason, why so very Few should Learn the
Art of Dying well, which ought to be the
Constant Study and Concernment of All; I
could Account for such a Practice no other
way, than from that Observation of the
Wise-man, viz. That the Knowledge of
Wisdom hath not been made Manifest,
and none hath understood her great
Experience.

Experience. For, to Reason fairly; where-
in can any Man Betray his want of Know-
ledge, or Distinguish Himself with more
Imprudence, than by a willful Ignorance of
that Art, which Alone can Teach him what
is the Chief Happiness for which he was
Created, and the Means to Obtain it; And
at the same time to be so Perversely Wise,
as with great Labour, and Incessant Ap-
plication to Pursue the Knowledge of Hu-
man Learning, or any other Inferiour Arts,
whereby he may Promote his Interest, and
Encrease his Estate? That the Art of Dy-
ing well is a Consideration of the Highest
Consequence, and therefore Worth of the
Knowledge of a Wise and Good Man is
Evident from hence; That Death Deter-
mines the Everlasting State of Man, by
sending him into another World to Give an
Account of all his Thoughts, Words, and
Actions, before God, Angels, and Men.
The Devil who is call'd the Accuser of the
Brethren will then draw up the Indictment
against him; his own Conscience, which af-
ter his Dissolution, can neither be bardn'd by
Obstinacy,

Obstinacy, nor deceiv'd by Ignorance, shall be Present as a Witness ; and God, the Sovereign Judge of all Men, shall pass Sentence upon him. 'Tis a Matter of Common Observation, how Diligent, and Industrious every Man is in all Cases of Civil Debate, and what Interest and Application he makes to procure Judgment in his Favour ; And at the same time, when the Great Cause of his own Everlasting Happiness or Misery is to be Heard at the Awful Tribunal of God, how Careless, how Negligent is he ? He too often goes out of the World, wholly Uncapable to give any Account of such Things, which perhaps, when he was in a State of Health, he never so much as Thought of. From hence we may Account for the Final Destruction of all wicked Men ; concerning whom St. Peter cries out with much Fear and Amazement of Thought ; Where shall the Ungodly and Sinner appear ? This Consideration induc'd me to Write This Discourse upon Death, and to Exhort both myself, and my Christian Brethren to Look beyond the Grave ;

Grave ; and, that if there is any Man who has not Learn'd the Knowledge of Dying well, from a more Able Hand, to Persuade him to Peruse what I have Collected from the Holy Scriptures, and the most Eminent Fathers upon this Subject ; and what I have also Enforc'd by Natural Reason.

But before I Proceed to Enlarge on such Rules as are Preparatory to a Happy Death, I conceive it may not be altogether Improper to Consider something of the Nature of Death itself ; as whether it be Good or Evil, a Punishment, or an Advantage to us ? Now if Death be considered Absolutely in itself, according to the Common Notion of it, as it Implies a Separation of Soul and Body, it ought, no Doubt on't, to be look'd upon as an Evil ; because it Deprives a Man of Life, which no One can deny to be Good, as being the Gift of God, I would add, on this Occasion, the Opinion of Solomon ; God made not Death, But Ungodly Men with their Words, and Works have brought it down upon Themselves. St. Paul is entirely of the same

same Opinion. The Wages of Sin is Death. By One Man, says he, in another place, Sin entr'd into the World, and Death by Sin. The Inference is Strong and Conclusive; If God made not Death, it cannot, simply consider'd, be accounted Good, or a Benefit to Mankind; for according to the Testimony of Moses, God saw every Thing that he had made, and behold it was Exceeding good.

Now altho' Death, consider'd in its own Nature is Really an Evil, and a Punishment to Mankind, yet by a Religious use of those Means which the Wisdom of God has appointed, it is frequently attended with very Good Consequences, and may, if a Man be not wanting to himself, prove to be of the Utmost Advantage to him. The Death of a Righteous Man is the Beginning of his Happiness, and his First Entrance into Glory; 'Tis so Beneficial to him, That God himself is well Pleas'd with it. Right Dear, in the sight of the Lord, is the Death of his Saints, is what The Royal Prophet assures us of. The Church, in One of her Collects,

Collects, speaking of the Saviour of Mankind, Thus expresses Herself; That Christ by his Death has overcome Death, and by his Resurrection hath open'd unto us the Gate of Everlasting Life. Now That Death, which Destroy'd Death, and Restor'd Men to Everlasting Life, must Certainly be a Benefit to them, at least in the Blessed Effects of it. It was for this Reason that St. Ambrose has Wrote a Book upon this Subject, wherein he proves very Cleerly, That altho Death be the Natural Punishment of Sin, yet, if the Consideration of it be rightly Improv'd, that 'tis of great Use and Advantage to Men.

But that the Reader may not be Oblig'd to Believe this Truth, barely, because I have told him so; I shall assign some Reasons for what I have said; and Prove, That tho' Death be an Evil in itself, yet that by the Grace of God, and his own Endeavours, it may be of the Highest Consequence to him. For in the First place, Death puts an End to all the Difficulties he Labour'd under, and to all the Afflictions which sat heavy upon him

him in the whole Course of this Life. The very Prospect of Death to a Man under Pain, or Want, or Persecution gives him Comfort and Refreshment. Job, who was Sadly Sensible of the Truth of it, has given a very Melancholy Description of the Miseries and Misfortunes of Human Life. Man that is Born of a Woman hath but a short time to Live, and is Full of Misery. And the Wise Man, who had made the Best Observations upon the State and Condition of Man in this World, is of Opinion; That 'tis Better not to Be, than to be Miserable. Wherefore, says he, I praised the Dead, that are already Dead, more than the Living which are yet Alive. Yea Better is he, than they who have not been, who have not seen the Evil work that is done under the Sun. It was the Contemplation of Death and a Invisible State which Fortify'd St. Paul, amidst all his Sufferings, and he knew how to Bear the Afflictions of this Life, Because he could not long Survive them. If
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in this Life only we had hope in Christ, we should be of all Men most Miserable.

This then is Undeniably Evident both from Reason and Scripture, That Death throws us into a State of Insensibility, I mean with Regard to all the Calamities and Uneasinesses of this Life. But Then; when we consider that it Opens a New Scene of Life, a Life of Sincere and Unmingl'd Delight; This in the Second place creates an Inexpressible Complacency in the Soul, and is the most Transporting Consequence of our Leaving this Present world. The Soul of Man is Enlarg'd by Death from all the Incumbrances of Flesh and Sense, and Rises with Cheerfulness and Vigour from a Dunghill to a Kingdom; It passes thro the Dark Chambers of the Grave, into the Regions of Eternal Light. The Following Revelation made to St. John, when he was Banish'd into the Isle of Patmos, Confirms This; I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write; Blessed are the Dead which Dye in the Lord, ev'n so saith the Spirit, for thy rest from their labours, and their works follow them. Death is the Instru-
ment

ment in the Hand of God, whereby He not only Sets the Soul at Liberty from Difficulty and Trouble, whereby he Lifts it above the Reach of Danger and Temptation, But also Finis it in the Open Vision and a near Enjoyment of Himself. The Souls of Good Men, after all their Conflicts with their Spiritual Enemies, are Remov'd by Death to the Heavenly Jerusalem, there to Receive a Crown of Glory, as the Reward of that Bravery and Resolution, which they Exerted Here in Fighting the Good Fight of Faith. Nay the Advantages of Dying are so Great, that ev'n Wicked Men do in some Respect, share in the Benefits of it; For as there are Different Degrees of Happiness and Glory, as also of Misery and Punishment in a Future State, it will be Some Abatement of their Infelicity, that Death puts a Stop to their Progress in Wickedness, and not permitts them to arrive at Higher Degrees of Disobedience.

It is the Consideration of these Advantages, among others, attending the Death of the Righteous Man, which Enliven him, even in all the Agonies of his Dissolution, with a Peculiar

culiar Alacrity, This that Sweetens his Pains, That Disarms the Terrours of Death, and makes it look Lovely and Desirable to him. It was the same Religious Assurance, the same Prospect of Heaven and Immortality, which Occasion'd, St. Paul to cry out. To me to Dye is Gain; And therefore be Ardently desir'd, To be Dissolv'd, and to be with Christ. And to Moderate our Sorrows upon the Loss of a Departed Relation, or Friend, he advises the Theſſalonians, and in them all Christians, Not to sorrow even as Those which have no hope; For if we believe that Jesus dy'd and rose again, even them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

The most Natural Inference, which a Good Christian can Draw from what I have Said upon the Subject is; That altho' Death not only a Temporal, but an Eternal Death, is the Natural Punishment and Consequence of Sin, yet by the Grace of God, and the Merits of Jesus Christ, who Suffered for us, we may make it Comfortable and Delightful to Ourselves, and to End in a Life of Happiness and Glory.

THE



THE
Art of Dying well.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

The First Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is this ; That he who desires in earnest to die a Happy Death, must be careful to live a Holy and a Virtuous Life.

MY Design in the following Treatise is to consider such Rules of Life, as may be of some Advantage to us when we come to Die. I shall divide the whole into Two Parts ; in the first, I shall lay down such Rules for dying well, as may be of some Service to us, when we are in a State of Health ; in the latter I shall consider such Instructions, as may be of good Importance to us, when we are visited with any dangerous Illness, and may have some Reason to believe, that Death is making its nearest Approaches to us. In the first Book, I shall

treat only of those Rules which arise from a Consideration of the Nature of the *Christian Virtues*, the *Christian Sacraments*, and other *Holy Institutions* of our Saviour. In the second, I shall enlarge only upon such Arguments, as arise from a Consideration of the four last Things, viz: *Death*, *Judgment*, *Heaven*, and *Hell*, together with proper Reflections on the Nature and Prevalency of such *Temptations* as we are most expos'd to in our last Hours, and of such *Remedies*, as may with most Success be apply'd to them. A due and distinct Consideration of each of these Particulars will furnish Mankind with the best Instructions for a Holy Life, and the most suitable Preparations for a Happy Death.

But before I enter upon Particulars, I must premise in General, *That he who desires to die well, must be careful to form his Life accordingly.* For since Death is nothing else but the Period or Conclusion of Human Life, 'tis a necessary Consequence, That he who ends or concludes his Life well, dies well; nor is it possible for that Man to die in a wicked State, who never liv'd so; As it is no less true on the other hand, That an unhappy Death is the natural Consequence of a wicked Life, and that 'tis morally impossible it should be otherwise. This Observation is no less true in the common Occurrences of Life. He who goes on in a strait Path, never mistakes his Way, but arrives safely at his Journey's end. Thus he who applies himself diligently to the Study of Human Learning, in a reasonable Time, may make a considerable Proficiency, and attain to the Last Improvements; but without a constant and regular Application to Business, the Best Instructions will be of little or no Significance to him.

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It may be objected probably upon the Argument I am upon, that the Case of the Thief upon the Cross was quite different; that he always thro' the whole Course of his Life continu'd in a sinful State, and yet at the last, that he died a peaceable and a happy Death. But I must crave leave to dispute the Truth of that Assertion; for it rather appears to me, that that pious and holy Robber always liv'd a pious and holy Life, and for that Reason principally, that he died a holy and peaceable Death. For tho' he spent the greatest part of his Life in Sin and Disobedience, yet the little remaining Part of it, was, in such a wonderful manner, employ'd in the Service of his Lord and Saviour, that I perswade my self, God was pleas'd to forgive his former Offences, and receive him into his Favour. For with how becoming a Zeal, and how with the most flaming Love of God, had this Man the Courage, even in the Height of his Sufferings, to vindicate his dying Saviour from the scornful Reproaches of his Persecutors, and with a Charity no less affectionate to his Neighbour; how did he admonish, and indeed very sharply reprove his blaspheming Fellow-sufferer, and in the very Instant of his own Death, endeavour to prepare him for Immortality? *Dost not thou fear God, says he, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds, but this Man hath done nothing amiss.* Luk. 23. 40, 41. This holy Acknowledgment was made when he was yet living, as was also that memorable Confession of our Saviour's Divinity, and the devout Adoration he paid to him; *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.* Ver. 43. So that this penitent Thief seems to me to be of the number of those Persons who came

last into the Vineyard, and yet by reason of a more Exemplary Life, and an Extraordinary Faith, they receiv'd a Reward equal to the first.

This general Rule therefore is evidently true, That he who lives well, dies well; and on the other hand, That he who is unrighteous in his Life is unhappy in his Death; and it must be acknowledg'd at the same time, that 'tis a dangerous Point to defer our Repentance to a dying Hour; That *'tis good for a Man to bear the Yoke in his Youth.* Lam. 3. 23. and that those Men are happy beyond Measure, who, in the Language of St. *John*, are redeemed from among Men, being the first Fruits unto God, and the Lamb; who are not only not defil'd with Women, but in whose Mouth there is found no Guile, as being without Fault before the Throne of God. Rev. 14. 3, 4, 5. Of this blessed Number was the Prophet *Jeremiah*, St. *John* who was more than a Prophet, and many other holy Men and Women, who are known only unto God. This then is my first Proposition, That *a virtuous and holy Life will certainly insure a happy Death.*

CH A P. II.

The Second Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is, To die to the World.

IT is incumbent on every Man, that he may live as he should do, to die to the World. For all Men who live to the World, are dead unto God. It is indeed

morally impossible, that any Man can so much as begin to live unto God, before he is dead to the World. This Truth is so plain and perspicuous from the Writings of the Old and New Testament, that it can never be called in Question but by Atheists and Infidels. But, *That in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses ev'ry Word may be establish'd:* I shall produce the Evidence of St. John, St. James, and St. Paul, Witnesses beyond Exception; Men who were extraordinarily inspir'd with the holy Spirit of Truth. St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, introducing Christ himself speaking, writes thus, *The Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me,* John 14. 30. Where by the Prince of the World he understands the Devil, who is the Prince and Governour of all Wicked Men; and by the World he understands the whole Number of Wicked Men, who love the World, and are belov'd by it. And in the next Chap. ver. 18, 19. *If the World hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the World, the World would love its own; but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hates you.* And again in his 17th Chapter, ver. 9. *I pray not for the World, but for them which thou hast given me.* Where 'tis obvious, that our Saviour by the Title of the World understands those, who, with the Prince of this World the Devil, shall hear, in the Day of Judgment, that fatal Sentence, *Go ye cursed into everlasting Fire.* The following Advice, enforc'd by Reason, is given by the same Apostle in his 1st Epistle, 2d Chapter, 15, 16, 17 ver. *Love not the World, neither the things that are the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the*
Father

Father is not in him. For all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World. And the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof: but he that doeth the Will of God abideth for ever. St. James in Chap. 4. and the 4th verse, writes the same Doctrine. Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, know ye not that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God. St. Paul likewise, who was a chosen Vessel, writing to all the Faithful, expresses himself to the same purpose; For then, says he, must ye needs go out of the World. 1 Cor. 5th Chapter and the 10th verse. And in the same Epistle, Chap. 11. ver. 23. When we are judged, we are chastised of the Lord, that we should not be condemned of the World. In these last Words St. Paul expressly declares, that the whole World shall be condemn'd at the last Day. Where he understands by the World, not the material Frame of Heaven and Earth, nor the whole Body of Men inhabiting the World, but those especially who love the World, and have set their Hearts and Affections upon it. For Men of strict Piety and exemplary Life, in whom the Love of God dwelleth, and who are not in Subjection to the Lusts of the Flesh, may properly indeed be said to be in the World, but not to be of the World; but Men of a loose Life, and unholy Conversation, are not only in the World, but of the World; and that for this Reason, because the Love of God reigneth not in their Hearts, but the Lusts of the Flesh, that is Luxury; the Lust of the Eyes, that is Covetousness; and the Pride of Life, that is, such a Haughtiness and Elation of Mind, whereby they rather imitate the Pride and Ambition

Ambition of the Devil, than the meek and humble Pattern of *Jesus Christ*.

As the Case stands thus, to be perfectly acquainted with *the Art of Dying well*, there lays an Obligation upon every Man, not only in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth, in some Sense *to go out of the World*; nay, indeed, *to dye to the World*, and to say with *St. Paul*, *The World is crucify'd unto me, and I unto the World*, Gal. vi. 14. This, however, I must confess is not a trifling Matter, but a Work of the greatest Difficulty and the highest Concernment. And therefore when this Question was put to our Saviour *Are there few Lord that shall be saved?* The Answer was *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate*. And again, in *St. Matthew's Gospel*, *Enter ye in at the strait Gate, for wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it*.

To have our Abode in the World, and at the same Time to live above the World, requires all the holy Courage and Bravery of a Christian. To behold the Beauty and Comeliness of all earthly Blessings, and yet not to settle our Affections upon them; to Taste the Sweetness and Deliciousness of Life, and yet not to be overpleas'd and fond of it; to despise Honours and Preferments; to be averse to a Life of Ease and Pleasure; to condescend to sit in the lowest Seat, and give others the Preheminence; in short, to live *in the Flesh*, and at the same Time to live *above the Flesh*; This ought to be look'd upon rather as the Life of an Angel, than that of a Man. And yet the Apostle writing to the Church of *Corinth*, the Members o,
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which were almost all of them marry'd Men; he thus Addresses himself to them, *But this, I say, Brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have Wives, be as tho' they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoyce, as tho' they rejoyced not; and they that buy, as tho' they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this World passeth away,* 1 Cor. xxix. 30, 31. The Sense of these Words is evidently this, That raising our Minds and Thoughts to a joyful Hope of Life and Immortality, we should be as indifferently affected with all earthly Enjoyments, as tho' they were of no Concernment to us: He allows indeed a Conjugal Affection between a Man and his Wife; but yet in Comparison of that Divine Love which Breaths after Heavenly Things, it ought to be as Nothing. If Passion prevails over Nature, and throws us into Tears for the Loss of our Children or our Estates, we must suppress the Risings of Grief, and *not be sorry as Men without hope*, If a Man be advanc'd to a considerable Post, or succeeds to a large Estate, let him keep his Joys within due Bounds; if by his Labour and Industry he purchases a House, or a Piece of Ground, let him sit as loose to the Possession of it, as if he had no Right or Title to it. In short, *St. Paul* in this Exhortation advises us, so to live in this World, as Strangers, and Probationers, and not as if we were Citizens and Inhabitants of it, which *S. Peter* more plainly inculcates, when he says, *I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.* This blessed Apostle would have us live in our own proper City and Habitation, as if we were travelling in another Country, altogether regard-

tell whether we liv'd in a State of Plenty or Want. This Precept is giv'n for this Reason, *That we may abstain from fleshly Lusts which war against the Soul;* For the Carnal Inclinations of Men do not easily rise, when they look upon the enticing Objects with Indifferency, and as no Ways concern'd in them. This therefore is to live in the World, but not to be of the World; which is the peculiar Felicity of those only, who are dead to the World, and live only to God. By this Means they conquer the natural Fears of Death, which creates no Uneasiness in them, but is the Occasion of inexpressible Delight and Joy; according to that of St. Paul, *To me to live is Christ, and to dye is gain.*

But what a Mournful Occasion does this Meditation offer me, when I consider the present State and Condition of the World? How Few, in Comparison of Numberless Sinners, shall we find thus Mortify'd to the Flesh, and Dead to the Enchantments and Temptations of the World? Alas! How Few in Comparison with those, who are not only not Dead to the World, but who riot in its Pleasures and Debaucheries, who wanton in Intemperance, and devote themselves with the most Ardent Affection to the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of the World, not considering what St. Paul assures them of, *That they shall be condemn'd with the World.*

But here perhaps it may be reply'd by those who have fix'd their Hearts and Affections entirely upon the World, that 'tis next to an Impossibility to Dye to the World, while we live in it, and to take no Pleasure in the Enjoyment of those good Things, which God has created not only for the Necessity and Refreshment, but even in some Instances, for the Delight of

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human Life. The Answer to what is alledg'd is this; That 'tis neither the Command, nor Will of God, that a Man should have an Entire Aversion to the Riches, Honours, and other good Things of Life, which God has created for the Use of Man; for this would argue a Contempt of his Providence, and is Allowable by many Instances of Scripture. *Abraham*, who was the Friend of God, was Immensely Rich. *David*, *Ezekiab*, and *Josia*, were very Opulent Princes, and at the same Time the Favourites of Heaven; and the same may be said of many Christian Kings and Emperors. The Affluence, the Preferments, the Delights of the World, and the Pursuit and Enjoyment in them, are not altogether forbidden Christians; but too Ardent a Desire, too Eager a Pursuit of 'em, which is call'd by St. *John*, *The Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, are most expressly forbidden. *Abraham*, 'tis true, had Riches in abundance, but then he never made them the Instruments of Luxury; he enjoy'd them with Moderation, and was always ready to dispose of them according to the Direction of that good Providence which gave them. For he who spar'd not his own Son, when God was pleas'd to command him to be sacrific'd even by his own Father. With what Cheerfulness and Holy Resignation, if God requir'd it, would such a Person part with the greatest Treasures? So that *Abraham*, tho' he had great Abundance, yet was he more Rich towards God; in Faith, in Charity, in good Works; and by Virtue of that Spiritual and Divine Life he led here, was entirely Dead and Mortify'd to the World. This is no less true, of many Wealthy, Potent, and Honourable Princes, who tho' residing over Kingdoms,

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and Rais'd to the Highest Stations of Dignity, and Government, yet being Poor in Spirit, and Dead to the World, and Living only unto God, were perfectly acquainted with *The Art of Dying Well*. So that neither a great Affluence of Riches, nor the Highest Titles and Honours, not even Empire and Dominion itself, can have such a Prevailing Influence over the Minds of good Men, as to enslave them to an immoderate Love of the World.

If any Man therefore, assisted by the Almighty Power of the Spirit of God, shall raise his Soul into the Highest Transports of Divine Love, shall Love God, not so much out of a Consideration of his Beneficence to him, as from a Contemplation of the Excellency of his own Nature, and Super-eminent Perfections; if in Consequence of so Heavenly a Flame, he shall, for the Sake of God, Love his Neighbour as himself, This Man has the Beginning of the Divine Life within him; and as the Love of God, and of his Neighbour encreases daily, the Love of the World and all earthly Satisfaction will sensibly vanish and decay in him.

When a Man is arriv'd to such a State of Holiness as this, Those Duties, which, when the Love of the World had wholly engross'd his Thoughts, seem'd Unpleasant, and almost Impracticable to him, he will now perform with the greatest Ease and Pleasure; and it will be his Meat and Drink to do the Will of his Father which is in Heaven.

As I therefore observ'd before; This Religious Duty of *Dying to the World*, and estranging our Affections from it, is no easy Performance; but a Work of Labour and Resolution, of Difficulty and Toil, and that especially to

those, who depending upon their own Strength, have not experienc'd the Power of the Spirit of God, nor tasted the sweets of Divine Love, as being sensual, having not the Spirit.

'Tis a Duty therefore Incumbent on every Man, who desires in good earnest to understand the *Art of Dying well*, upon which his true Happiness does Principally depend, to keep off, with all Speed, from the Pleasures of *Flesh and Sense*, and to *Dye to the World*; For 'tis a great Inconsistency to imagine, that we can Live to God and the World at the same time; or that an Earthly and a Sensual Life will qualify us for the Enjoyment of Heaven.

C H A P. III.

The Third Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is, To observe carefully the Three Theological Graces, viz. Faith, Hope, and Charity.

IN the last Chapter it was made to appear, that a Man can't Dye well, unless he Dies to the World; it follows now, according to the natural Order of Things, that I consider what Duties are incumbent on him, who is Dead to the World, that he may effectually Live unto God. Now the General Duty of Living well is compendiously drawn up by the Apostle, *Tim. i. 5. The End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a Pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned.* St. Paul was not ignorant of the Answer given by our Lord, to the Apostle, who ask'd him,
Lord,

Lord, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal Life? If thou wilt enter into Life, says he, Keep the Commandments. It was our Saviour's Intendment not only to describe, in as few Words as could be, the Main End and Scope of the first Commandment of the Law, in which not only the whole Law itself, but even the Knowledge of that Law, and the Accomplishment and Perfection of it did consist, nay even the Hopes of Eternal Salvation did principally depend upon; but at the same Time to Instruct us also what Virtues and good Qualifications are necessary to make up and constitute, according to the Conditions of Evangelical Obedience, a Perfect Righteous Man; agreeably to what he had declared in another Place, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. *And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these Three; but the greatest of these is Charity.* In which Words he expressly declares, *That the End of the Commandment is Charity*; that is, that the Chief Design of all the Moral Precepts of the Law, the Observance of which is Necessary to a good Life, does principally consist in Charity; so that he who is inflam'd with this principle of Divine Love, will, in Obedience to that Law, form his Life according to all the particular Branches of it, specify'd in the First Table; and that he who is endow'd with a true Christian Charity towards his Neighbour, will in Consequence of that Principle, fulfil all the particular Duties of the Second also. This latter Duty of Love to our Neighbour, that it might have an equal Evidence with that of our Love to God, St. Paul does more fully explain in the 13th of the Romans, *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law. For this, thou shalt not commit Adultery, thou shalt not Kill,*
thou

thou shalt not Steal, thou shalt not bear false Witness; thou shalt not Covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law, Verſ. 8, 9, 10. From this Argument it is evident, That all the Moral Precepts of the Law, which relate to the Worship and Obedience, and Service of God, do, and ought to proceed from the Love of him. For as the Love of our Neighbour worketh no ill, but obliges us to all Christian Acts of Kindness and Affection to him, so the Love of God worketh no ill to God, but obliges us to all those Acts of Outward and Inward Homage and Adoration, which the Dignity and Excellence of his Nature demand of us; so that the Love of God, and the Love of our Neighbour is the Fulfilling and Accomplishment of the whole Law.

Wherein the Nature and Excellence of true Evangelical Love, both towards God and our Neighbour does consist, St. Paul informs us in the Words above-mention'd, *viz. In a pure Heart, in a good Conscience, and in Faith unfeigned.* In which Words, by a good Conscience, we are to understand with St. Austin, in his Preface to the 31st Psalm, the Virtue of Hope, which was always accounted one of the Theological Graces. This Divine Grace is call'd by the Name of a good Conscience, because it does naturally Result and Spring from it; as all Desperation, with its Self-tormenting Thoughts, does from a bad one; according to that of St. John, *Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God,* Eph. iii. 21. 'Tis evident from hence, That there

are Three Heavenly Graces, in which the Perfection of the Christian Law doth consist; *Charity out of a pure Heart*, *Hope out of a good Conscience*, and a *Sincere and Orthodox Faith*; of which tho' *Charity* be the most Perfect and Excellent Grace, yet is a Sound *Faith* the Cause both of *Charity* and *Hope* also.

The first Theological Grace therefore which I shall insist upon, shall be *Faith*, because 'tis, as I observe it, the Holy Fountain from whence all other Christian Virtues do proceed, and is the First Principle of the Divine Life in Man, before his Justification; *St. Paul* gives it the Title of *unfeign'd*, and that for this weighty Reason, Because 'tis only a True and Sincere, and not a Counterfeit and an Hypocritical Faith that justifies a Man. Now a Man may be said to be Insincere and Hypocritical in his Faith Two Ways, either when he pretends to believe the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, when in Reality he does not believe it; or otherwise, when indeed he does believe it, but lives in so Irregular a Manner, as tho' he did not believe it. Those Words of *St. Paul*, *They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him*, *Tit. i. 16.* is Applicable to both these Sorts of Men; and in this Sense they are interpreted both by *St. Jerom* and *St. Austin*.

From the Notion of Faith thus stated, what a Melancholy Reflexion is it to consider, how great the Number of those Men is, who do not Live well, and by Consequence that Dye ill. To pass by all Infidels, Pagans, Hereticks, and Atheists, who are altogether ignorant of *The Art of Dying well*, How great is the Number of those who act inconsistently with their Belief? Who profess that Jesus Christ shall be the Judge of the Quick and Dead, and yet live in such a licentious Manner as if they

they were to give no Account of their Actions; who speak highly in Praise of Abstinence, and Prayers, and Giving of Alms, and other Works of Piety and Charity, and yet are always practising the contrary Vices. It is therefore the highest Contradiction in these Men to pretend to a Sound and Sincere Faith, who neither live nor believe as the Christian Faith directs them; and from hence let them learn what little Reason they have to believe themselves in a State of Grace, or to expect the Favour of God.

The next Theological Grace is *Hope*, or as 'tis call'd by Sr. Paul, *A good Conscience*. This Grace proceeds from a Sincere Faith: For no Man can have any Reason to hope in God, who does not believe in Him, and who does not also believe him to be both Good and Powerful, *i. e.* That he pities our Necessities, and is able to relieve them. But to excite and strengthen this *Hope* into a holy *Confidence* in God, a good Conscience is the most prevailing Means. For with what Assurance can any Man address himself to God, or request any Favour from him, who has some lurking Stings of Guilt within him, for Crimes as yet unrepented of? With what Face can he ask a Favour from him whom he has provok'd? What Confidence can he have in this Providence, when he is sadly sensible even to the Soul of him, that the Wrath of God hangs over his Head? The wise Man with great Eloquence has describ'd the miserable Condition of such Men. *The hope of the ungodly, says he, is like the Dust that is blown away with the Wind; like a thin Froth that is driven away with the Storm; like as the Smoak which is dispers'd here and there with a Tempest, and passeth away as the Remembrance of a Guest that tarrieth but a Day.* Wisd. 5. 4.

These

These Words are a useful Admonition to all Wicked Men, That their Hopes are falacious, and ill-grounded ; of a short Date, and never Lasting. For altho' as long as Life continues they may have some Hopes that they shall Repent, some Time or another, and make their Peace with God, yet is it the Ordinary Practice of these Men to defer their Repentance to a Dying Hour ; and at that dreadful Juncture, unless prevented by God's Special Grace and Mercy, and a Sincere Repentance, which at that Time is a Work of Extreme Difficulty, all these Imaginary Hopes are chang'd into Despair, and with those Wicked Men in the same Chapter they make this Heavy Complaint against Themselves, *We have Err'd from the Way of Truth, and the Light of Righteousness hath not shin'd unto us. What hath Pride profited us ? Or what Good have Riches with our Vaunting brought us ? All those Things are passed away like a Shadow.* In these Words the Wise Man Preaches to all Men this wholesome Doctrine, That if they would Live Virtuously, and Dye Peaceably, they should Act like Men and Christians, and immediately Resolve upon Amendment ; That they should not flatter and deceive themselves with these and the like Notions, viz. That they are now in the Bloom and Spring of Youth, that they have many Years, in all probability, to Live in the World, and therefore that it will be Time enough to think of Repenting hereafter. For such a False Confidence as This has deceived many, and will, generally Speaking, for ever deceive Those who shall be so Weak as to Trust to it.

The Third Theological Grace remains now to be consider'd, and that is, *Love or Charity.* This is the

Queen of all Christian Virtues, with which whosoever is Endow'd, can never Perish, without which no Man Living is, or can be Justify'd. Now to constitute the Nature of True Charity, it is necessary, that it proceed from a *Pure Heart*; not that Purity of Heart is the proper Cause of it; *For Love*, as St. *John* tells us, *is of God, and every one that Loveth, is Born of God, and knoweth God*, 1 Eph. 4. 7. and St. *Paul* more distinctly; *The Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*, Rom. v. 5. This Duty therefore of Love is said to be out of a Pure Heart, because it is never kindled in an Impure One, but is seated only in such a Heart as is Purified by a Divine Faith both from the Errors of Falshood, and the Corruptions of Sin, in such a Heart only as is purify'd by a Divine Hope of, and an Ardent Thirst after Immortality, from all inordinate Desires of Worldly Enjoyments. The Flames of Divine Love can be no more enkindled in an Earthly, Sensual, and an Impure Soul, than we can kindle a Fire from Wood that is Green, and full of Moisture.

From this Notion then of Love and Charity, it will require no Great Discernment to distinguish the True Notion and Nature of it from that which is false and pretended only. For let a Man discourse never so Seraphically of God and Heavenly Things, let him Pray also with the Utmost Ardency and Affection, let him Bewail his Sins with all the Outward Signs of Sorrow and Repentance, let him give himself up to Fasting, Self-denial, Charity, and the Exercise of many other Good Works; And yet at the same time, if he retain any Immoderate Desires, if he harbour any Impure Thoughts, if he be puff'd up with too High a
Conceit

Conceit of his own Inimitable Self; If he has not that Hearty Love and Concern for his Neighbour, and his Wellfare as he ought to have, This Man is not inflam'd with this Heavenly Fire of Love and Charity, but is in Reality a Downright Hypocrite, and makes only a Shew and an Appearance of it. The Apostle therefore, speaking of that Obedience, and the Terms of it, which the Gospel requires of every Christian, assures us with great Wisdom, *That the End of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure Heart, of a good Conscience, and Faith unfeigned.* The whole Art of Dying Well consists in the Knowledge of this Precept, and a constant Observation of it thro' the whole Course of our Life.

CH A P. IV.

The Fourth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is, That a Man observe, in a Particular Manner, the Three Evangelical Precepts.

THO' what has already been said of Faith, Hope and Charity, may seem sufficient to direct a Man in the Paths of Holy Living and Dying, Yet that he may exercise those Graces with more Ease, and to Higher Degrees of Perfection, our Blessed Saviour has been pleas'd in his Gospel to prescribe to us a Particular Obedience of Three other Precepts. *Let your Loyns, says he, be girded about, and your Lights burning, And ye yourselves like unto Men that wait for the Lord, when he will return from the Wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those Servants, when the Lord when he cometh shall find watching,* Luke xii. 35, 36, 37.

This Parable may be explain'd two Ways; and may relate either to that Preparation which is necessary for ev'ry Man to meet our Lord with at his Second Coming to Judge the World, or otherwise his Coming to us in that Particular Judgment which shall be at the Day of ev'ry Man's Death. This latter Explication of the Words, which is the same with that of *St. Gregory* in his 13th Homily on the same Place, I shall principally follow, as being most Applicable to the Design in hand; For the Expectation of the Day of Judgment do's more immediately relate to those Men, who shall then be found Alive upon the Earth; Whereas it is certain, that our Saviour gave these Directions to his Apostles then living, and to their Successours, who liv'd many Ages from the Last Day. Besides; our Lord assures us, *That before his Second Coming, There shall be Signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and on the Earth, Distress of Nations, Mens Hearts failing them for Fear, and Expectation of those Things, which shall come upon the Earth.* But as to the Coming of our Lord to the Particular Judgment of every Man at the Day of his Death, there is no express Mention made in Scripture of any Signs that shall precede it; And to this Second Coming of our Saviour do those Words so often mention'd in Scripture particularly relate, where it is said, *That our Lord shall come as a Thief in the Night, i.e.* When he is least expected.

It will therefore be of general Service to every Christian, if I briefly Explain this Parable, that we may understand, and be convinc'd, That a Due Preparation for Death is a Business of the Greatest Necessity and Importance to us. There are Three Duties prescribed in the Words abovemention'd. The First is; That our
Loyns

Loyns be girded about. The Second, That we have our Lamps burning. The Third Duty is; That we Watch, and be like Men that wait for the Lord, as not knowing the Time of his Coming.

The First Thing prescribed in these Words is : *That we have our Loyns girded about.* The Literal Sense of which Words is plainly this ; That we be always ready and prepar'd to meet our Lord, when by Death he shall call us to a Particular Judgment. The Similitude of having our *Loyns girded about*, is taken from the Custom of the Eastern Nations who wore long Garments, so that when they were inclin'd to walk with more Speed, they tuck'd up their Garments round their Waste, that the Length of them might not retard them in their Journey. Hence it was, that 'tis said of the Angel *Raphael*, when he came to accompany *Tobias* the younger, *Then Tobias going forth found a young Man in shining Garments standing before him, girt about his loyns, and prepared for a Journey.* Tob. v. To this Custom of the People of the East, St. Peter alludes in that Exhortation, 1 Eph. i. 13. *Wherefore gird up the loyns of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end.* And St. Paul to the same Purpose, Eph. vi. 14. *Stand therefore, having your loyns girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness.*

To have our Loyns girt does farther signify the Virtue of Chastity, as it does secondly a Promptitude and Willingness to meet our Saviour not only in our own Particular Judgment, but at the General Judgment of all Mankind. St. Basil in his Exposition of the 15th of *Isaiab*, St. Austin in his Book of *Continency*, and St. Gregory in his 13th *Homily* upon the *Evangelists*, explain the Words in the First Sense. And indeed not
with

without Reason; for of all the Vicious Habits and Affections of the Mind, there is not any which so much incumbers us in our Christian Course as an Impure and Carnal Conversation; And on the contrary, that nothing conduces more to our Following our Saviour, than Chastity and Modesty, and a Freedom from all Manner of Concupiscence. We read in the *Revelations*, That the *Virgins follow'd the lamb whithersoever he went*, chap. xiv. vers. 4. and St. Paul 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23. *He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things of the world, that he may please his wife.*

The other Exposition of the Words, which restrains them not only to the Virtue of Continency, but extends the Sense of them to a Promptitude and Willingness to meet our Saviour, both at the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, is the Opinion of St. Cyprian in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, and is agreeable to the Sense in which all Commentators upon St. Luke have explain'd them. The Meaning therefore of this Evangelical Command is this; That even the most Commendable and Necessary Employments of Life should never so far engage our Time and our Thoughts, as to take us off from the more Important Consideration of meeting our Saviour, when he shall Summon us by Death to give an Account, not only of our Works, but also of every Idle, and Unprofitable Word and Thought. Unhappy beyond Expression will the Condition of that Man be who is unprovided for his Last Hour. Who, being wholly taken up with the Pleasures and Gaiety, and Concernments of Life, has never enter'd into himself, nor taken any Account how Matters stand between God and his Soul, seldom consider'd with himself, how
often

often he has misbehav'd in Thought, in Word, in Deed; and scarce ever employ'd a serious Hour in reflecting on the Nature and Circumstances of Sin; As whether it were committed thro' Inadvertency or Weakness, thro' Ignorance or Misunderstanding, or, which is the Highest Aggravation of all, thro' Willfulness and Premeditation. Can any Man, in so unhappy a State as this, presume to go out to meet his Saviour? or rather under the Pressure and Load of his own Guilt shall he not lie down in Silence, in Despair, and in Confusion of Thought? What Answer can he make to the Sovereign Judge of the World at the last Summons? What Obedience have you paid to my Commands, wherein I admonish'd you, saying, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Mat. vi. 33. Why did not those Words, so often read to you by your Minister in the Publick Congregation make a Deeper Impression upon you? *Martha, Martha, thou art careful about many things; but one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.* Luke x. 41, 42. If I blam'd the Care and Concern of *Martha* in being so Sollicitous to please me, do you think I can be any way pleas'd with that Worldly Sollicitude with which you amass to your self unnecessary Riches? Is it any Delight to me to see you aiming at Honours and Preferments? Do I take any Satisfaction in observing you to gratify your Corrupt Appetites and Inclinations, and at the same time to be wholly regardless of the Kingdom of Heaven, of more Solid Pleasures, and more Lasting Enjoyments.

But to proceed to the other Duty of a Diligent and Faithful Servant, specify'd in these Words, and your *Lights burning.*

It

It is not sufficient to a Faithful Servant, that his Loyns are girt about, that he may run with more Speed and Freedom to meet his Lord, but 'tis requir'd also, that his Lamp be burning to light him in his Way, when his Saviour shall return from the Wedding Feast. The Word *Lamp* in this Place signifies the Law of God, which shews us the Good Way wherein we should walk. *Thy Word*, says *David*, *is a Lanthorn unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Paths*. And the Wise *Solomon* expresses himself to the same Purpose. *Thy Law*, says he, *is a Light and a Lamp*, Prov. vi. 23. Now this Light, if it be left in a House or in a Chamber, will not direct us in the Way; No, we must bear it before us in our Hands for that Purpose. There are many Men who thoroughly understand the Nature and Properties and Obligations both of Human and Divine Laws, and yet because they Guide not themselves by those Lights, and apply not their Knowledge to their Works, either omit some necessary Duties, or commit some Heinous Sins. And what can be the Reason that Men of Approv'd Sense and Distinguish'd Judgment should act in this Manner? Why the Reason is Plain; Because when they are doing this or that Action, they never consult the Law of God, or compare it with that Rule, but are hurry'd away with Passion, or are led aside by Lust, or Humour, or Interest, or other Inordinate Affections of the Mind. If Royal *David*, when he saw *Bathsheba*, had given himself Time to consider the Obligation of the Tenth Commandment, he had not so imprudently fallen into the Great Sin of Adultery; but the Beauty of the Woman, his own Concupiscence, and want of Consideration led him into the Presumptuous Sin. It is a Duty therefore incumbent upon every Man, to see that his Lamp

be Burning in his Hands, that it be no Way Darkn'd in being put under a Bushel, or wholly Extinguish'd by his Own Inconsideration, but that in Obedience to the Law of God, *He Exercise himself in that Law, Day and Night*, Psal. 1. 2. That he may say with the same Person, *Thou hast charg'd that we shall diligently keep thy Commandments. O! that my Ways were so directed, that I might keep thy Commandments*, Psal. 119. For he that carries the Light of God steadily before his Eyes, will surely meet him with Safety at his Coming.

The Third and Last Duty of a Faithful Servant remains now to be consider'd; and that is a Constant Watchfulness for the Coming of our Lord, by Reason of the Uncertainty of it, *Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing*. It is a great Argument of the Wisdom of Divine Providence, that He hath not prescrib'd any Certain Period of Human Life, that Men might not employ the Greatest Part of their Time in Luxury and Fullness, in Merriment and Pleasure, or any of the Gay Diversions of Life, and when Death shall make its near Approaches to them, then to prepare themselves for Immortality. The Uncertainty of Human Life, I say, is a Great Instance of the Divine Wisdom; and it is a strong Obligation for every Man to be upon his Guard, when he shall observe that some Dye even before they are Born, others in their very Birth; that some tho' they may arrive to a good Old Age, yet that others dye in the Bloom and Vigour of Youth; That others again, tho' they gently go off by a Leisureable Decay, yet that there are some who are snatch'd away at once. To represent the uncertainty

of Death as a Motive for our Watchfulness, our Lord assures us in his Gospel; *That if he shall come in the Second Watch, or come in the Third Watch, Blessed are those Servants. And know ye this, that if the good Man of the House had known what Hour the Thief would come, he would have watch'd, and not have suffer'd his House to be broken up. Be ye therefore ready; because ye know not the Hour when the Son of Man cometh,* Luke 12. 38, 39, 40. Of what great Importance it is, that Men should thoroughly consider the Uncertainty of our Saviour's Coming, whether to every Man in Particular at the Time of his Death, or at the Last General Judgment, is Evident from hence; That there is no Duty more Frequently inculcated in Scripture, than that of *Watchfulness*; And the Similitude of a *Thief*, who cometh in the Night, is no less often propos'd to us as an Incentive to that Duty. The Exhortation, *Watch ye*, is more than once repeated in the Gospels of St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*. And the Similitude of a *Thief* is set before us, not only in all the *Gospels*, but also in the *Epistles* and *Revelations*.

How does this Doctrine upbraid the Scandalous Ignorance and Carelessness, not to say the Folly and Madness of the Greatest Part of Mankind, who tho' so often admonish'd by the Spirit of Truth, who cannot Lye, to Prepare themselves for Death, as a Business of the Highest Importance, and the Greatest Difficulty, upon which their Everlasting Happiness or Misery does wholly depend; yet how Few are there who attend to this Voice, or rather this Awaking Call of the Spirit of God.

But

But perhaps it may be Objected by some; Where's the Necessity of such a Constant Watchfulness, in Order to Prepare us for Death? There are no Means so Prevailing for this Purpose, as a Serious Enquiry into, and Thorough Examination of our Consciences. In Answer to which, it may be Reply'd; That if this Enquiry into the State and Condition of our Souls be Sincere, Universal, and Constant, it is Nothing else but the Duty of Watchfulness here prescrib'd, or at least the Consequence of it. But unless this Examination be Constant, and thus Qualify'd, it will not Reach the Case of those Men who are snatch'd away by a sudden Death, or of those who are seiz'd with a Frenzy, or a Delirium, nor of those Persons, who by Reason of the Acuteness of their Pains, and the Violence of the Distemper, are wholly Incapable of making such an Enquiry; much less of those who are the Causes of their own Death, or who Dye in their Sins; which is the Case of those who are slain in an Unjust War, or in Duelling, or are kill'd in the Commission of any other Act of Injustice whatsoever.

In Order to a Prudent and Religious Avoidance of such a State as this, there is nothing so highly Conducive as not only a General Enquiry into, but also a Particular Examination of our Consciences, at the least Twice in the Day, *viz.* Morning and Evening. It is necessary that we Look into ourselves, and see how the Account stands between God and our Souls; That we consider the Ends, Causes, and Circumstances of all our Thoughts, Words, Actions, Desires, and Resolutions, the Day before. To Observe with ourselves where we went out of the Way; and in that Case to make what Amends we can by

Restitution or Amendment. To this Purpose it is Re-
 quisite, that Men should in the most Humble Manner,
 implore the Mercy of God in bestowing on them the
 Grace of Contrition, that they may Reflect within
 themselves upon the Grievousness of those Crimes they
 have committed; Let them throw off with Detestation
 their Favourite Sins; Let them aggravate their Offences
 from a Consideration of the Dignity of Him whom
 they have sinn'd against; Let them consider that
 Man, who is but a Worm, has transgress'd against an
 Omnipotent God, and that he who is at best but an
Unprofitable Servant, has provok'd the Great Lord and
 Creator both of Heaven and Earth. Let them then
 express their Repentance with all the Outward Signs of
 Indignation and Resentment against themselves; and
 and let them Conclude the whole Affair with the
 most Firm and Steady Resolutions never to Repeat
 their Crimes against so Gracious and Merciful a Father.
 After an Examination so Devout and so Solemn as
 This Every Morning and Evening, or at least
 Once a Day, 'twill be impossible that any Man
 should either Live or Dye in a Sinful State, or be
 any Way Surpriz'd by the Suddenness of his Dis-
 temper, or be Unprovided against any Indisposition,
 or Unforeseen Accident that may befall him.

CHAP. V.

C H A P. V.

The Fifth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is This; That we do not Look upon the Riches which God has given us as Properly our own, but to be us'd only to those good Purposes for which he gave them.

WHAT I shall say in this Chapter shall be in Confutation of a very Prevailing Errour among some Men, and which indeed is a very great Hindrance both to a Good Life, and a Happy Death; and that is This; That according to their Judgment, the Riches and Abundance which Men possess is Properly and Simply their own; because they hold them by a Just and Legal Title; and that for this Reason they are at Liberty to bestow, or distribute, or lay 'em out as they please; and that no one has Authority to call them in Question, How or in what Manner they spend them. Why all this Equipage and Appearance? Why are you so High in your Entertainments? Why do you lavish your Money so Profusely in Games, and Sports, and other Expensive Diversions? The Answer of these Men to this Kind of Admonition is, generally Speaking, a little Rough and Uncourtly, *Concern yourself with your own Affairs. Is it not Lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* Now This, Questionless, is a very Grievous and a very Destructive Errour. For tho' it be confess'd, That every Man has a Legal Right to what he possesses, and that no Man with-

out

out Injury and Injustice can Claim or Deprive him of that Right ; yet if we consider the Dependency of every Man upon God, and the Subserviency of the Creature to the Creator, Men cannot so properly be call'd real Proprietors of what they have, as Managers and Stewards for Him ; as will Appear from many Reasons.

The Royal Psalmist is very exprefs to this Purpose ; *The Earth is the Lords, and all that is therein ; the Compass of the World, and they that dwell therein,* Psal. xxiv. 1. And again in another Place, *I know all the Fowls upon the Mountains, and the Wild Beasts of the Field are in my Sight. If I be Hungry, I will not tell thee ; for the whole World is mine, and all that is therein,* Psal. l. 11, 12. When David offer'd to God for the Building of the Temple, Three Thousand Talents of Gold, and Seven Thousand Talents of Refin'd Silver, and Marble-Stone in abundance ; and when the Fathers and Princes of the Tribes, after the Example of their King, had offer'd Five Thousand Talents of Gold, Ten Thousand Talents of Silver, and Eighteen Thousand Talents of Brass, and a Hundred Thousand Talents of Iron, he makes this Acknowledgment to God ; *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty : For all that is in the Heaven and in the Earth is thine ; thine is the Kingdom O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of Thee, and Thou Reignest over all, &c. But who am I, and what is my People, that we should be able to Offer so willingly after this Sort ? For all Things come of Thee, and of Thine have we given Thee,* 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, 14. And to confirm this

this beyond the Possibility of a Denial, we have the Testimony of God himself; *The Silver is Mine, and the Gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, Hagg. ii. 8.*

The Parable of the *Unjust Steward*, is a farther Confirmation of this Truth. *There was a certain Rich Man, says our Saviour, who had a Steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his Goods. And he call'd him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an Account of thy Stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer Steward.* By the *Rich Man* here mention'd, no doubt of it, is meant God; by the *Steward*, according to the Original, is understood a Man of some Substance; *St. Austin, St. Chrysostom*, and almost all the Fathers interpret the Word in this Sense. This then is an unquestionable Truth, as unquestionable as the Gospel itself, That whatsoever any Man Possesses, tho' Humanly Speaking he has never so Just a Right to it, yet that in Fact, he is no other than a Steward or Dispenser of God's Bounty, and that he is accountable to his Master for the least Misapplication of it. And this Assertion is entirely agreeable to the whole Design and Tenor of this Parable; in which it evidently appears, that if a Man Misbehaves himself and Acts Unjustly, the Lord of the Household, either by Poverty or Death, can remove him from his Stewardship; which is the Genuine Sense of those Words, *Give an Account of thy Stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer Steward.* Many Reasons may be given why God sometimes thinks fit to remove Rich Men from their Stewardship, by Reducing them to a State of Poverty: And indeed the Losses which Rich Men Suffer either by Land or Water, by Shipwrecks and Inundations, by Robbery

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or Fire, by too much Rain, or too much Want of it, are only so many Voices from God, and Express Declarations as it were of this Heavy Judgment; *Thou shalt be no longer Steward.*

The Advice which is added in the Conclusion of this Parable, *Make to yourselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting Habitations*, Verſ. 9. is not intended as an Exhortation to Rich Men to be Charitable to others out of what is unjustly gotten; but in Reality, that they should Exercise their Charity with those Things, which are not really the True Riches, but are only Improperly call'd so. This Explanation of the Words is confirm'd by what follows, where our Saviour says; *If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your Trust the True Riches?* Verſ. 11. *i. e.* If you have not made a Right Use of Worldly Treasures, who will commit to your Care the True Riches? *i. e.* the Riches of God's Grace; and those Valuable Qualifications which Ennoble and Enrich the Mind. These Words are thus Explain'd both by St. Cyprian in his Discourse of *Charity and Good Works*, and St. Austin in his Second Book of *Evangelical Questions*, where he Expounds This *Mammon of Unrighteousness*, to mean only those Riches which Ignorant and Worldly Men mistake for such; when at the same Time, Men of Better Judgment, and more Holiness, look upon those Riches with Coldness and Indifference, and Esteem the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit to be the only True

I shall give but one Instance more to this Purpose; and that is in the Chapter before us, and which indeed may be look'd upon as a Commentary upon the Parable of *The Unjust Steward*. There was a certain Rich Man, says our Saviour, who was cloth'd in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously every Day. And there was a certain Beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his Gate, full of Sores. And desiring to be fed with the Crumbs which fell from the Rich Man's Table; Moreover the Dogs came and licked his Sores; and it came to pass that the Beggar dyed, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom: The Rich Man also dyed, and was buried. And in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments, &c. Verſ. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

This Rich Glutton, questionless, was one of those Persons, who look'd upon themselves as Absolute Proprietors of their own Riches, and not as the Dispensers or Stewards of God; And therefore was of Opinion, that to Feast High, and Dress Sumptuously, to follow his Sports and Recreations Incessantly, and to divert himself with Plays and Masquerades, were no Offences against God, tho' he was no Way Beneficial to the World. This is the Language of such Men; "I spend nothing but what is my own. I do no Injury to any Man. I Obey where God has Commanded me. I am no Blasphemer. I was never Guilty of Perjury. I am, to the utmost, Dutiful to my Parents. I am Innocent as to any Charge of Murder, Adultery, Theft, Bearing False Witness, or Desiring any Thing that is my Neighbours." Now if this Case be rightly Stated, how came it to pass that we read, that *The Rich Man lift up his Eyes in Hell, being in Torment*? Why; this can be accounted for no other

Way than This, That this Man probably in some Instances was Negatively Good; and perhaps with Respect to God, and himself, had perform'd some Duties of a Positive Nature; yet that he had not employ'd his Substance to the Support and Maintenance of the Poor and Needy, and the Publick Benefit of Mankind. It must be confess'd therefore to be a General Mistake to say; That every Man has an Absolute Right to that which is his Own; and Consequently, that he is at Liberty to dispose of it as he Pleases. For if there had been any Thing more Remarkable in the Behaviour of this Man, than his Want of Charity, in all Probability it had been Recorded in this Parable for the Instruction of Mankind; but since nothing of that Kind is mention'd, the whole Parable as to the Principal Design of it, must be interpreted to Point out to us this Momentous Truth; *That to go so far in our Expences in Supporting the Pride and Luxury of Life, as to unqualify ourselves to be any Way Charitable and Beneficent to the Poor, will entitle us to the most Dreadful Punishments in a future State.*

This therefore is another Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death; That a Man Seriously and Frequently consider with himself; That he must certainly give an Account to God of all his Extravagance, Superfluities, nay even his unnecessary Expences; Because that by these Means he does great Injury to his Distress'd Brother, and Renders himself Incapable of being any Ways useful to the World. The Cries of the Sick and Needy, even to the Day of Judgment, will reach to Heaven against him, and he will receive his Reward with the Rich Man in the Gospel.

CHAP. VI.

The Sixth Rule Preparatory to the Art of Dying well is ; To observe constantly the Three Moral Virtues ; viz. Piety towards God, Justice towards our Neighbour, and Temperance towards Ourselves.

ALtho' the Three Theological Graces of *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*, are a short Summary of the whole Body of the Christian Religion, and Comprehend the whole *Art of Living and Dying well* ; yet the Divine Spirit, the First Author and Revealer of the Word of God, for the more Perfect Understanding of this Art, hath been pleas'd to add also Three Moral Virtues, which are of Great Service and Advantage to that Purpose. These Virtues, in short, are *Temperance*, *Justice*, and *Godliness* ; of all which St. Paul in his Epistle to *Titus*, thus Expresses himself in this Memorable Sentence, *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appear'd to all Men ; Teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World.* Tit. 2. 11, 12. In this Passage we have also briefly compriz'd the whole Christian Law. *Flee from Evil, and do the Things that is Good*, says the Royal Prophet. Now the Nature of Evil does principally Consist in these Two Things ; First in our Turning away from God, by withdrawing that Obedience and Adoration we owe to him ; And, Secondly, in our Turning to his Creatures, and setting our whole Heart and Affections upon them. This Notion of the Nature of Evil, is altogether

ther agreeable to what is express'd by the Prophet *Jeremiah, My People have committed Two Evils; they have forsaken me the Fountain of Living Waters, and hew'd them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no Water,* Chap. ii. 13. Now the Duty of every Man who would avoid both these Kinds of Evil, is to *Deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts.* For Ungodliness Turns us from our Creator, and all Worldly Lusts Terminate in the Creature. And as to what relates to the Practice of that which is Good, a Man may then be said to Live up to the Terms of the Gospel Obedience, when he Walks Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World; that is when he Practices the Necessary Duties of *Temperance, Justice, and Holiness.*

But to enlarge farther on so Noble and Useful an Argument; What is it which the Apostle here understands by the Word *Ungodliness*? What does this import less than a Contrariety to all the Purity and Perfection of God, a Repugnancy to his Will, and a Disobedience to his Commands? Wherein, on the other Hand, does the Nature of Godliness consist? Or how can we better describe its Excellency than by saying; That 'tis a Ray of the Divine Spirit; such a Gift and Dispensation of the Holy Ghost as disposes us to pay to God that Reverence and Worship as is suitable to the Perfection and Excellence of this Nature? The first Step to a positive Holiness, and to *Walk Soberly*, is to be Negatively Good, and to *deny Ungodliness*, or which is much to the same Purpose, to Live so strict and severe a Life, as never, so far as Worldly Temptations and Human Frailty will give us leave, to be Guilty of any Transgression whatsoever. But what Reason is there, you'll say, to require both these Duties of

of us? Is not one effectually Sufficient without the other? The Answer is; That there is a Necessity for Both, and that it was the Intention of the Apostle in this Scripture to express to us the Universality of our Obedience, *i. e.* That it ought to exclude all Mixture of Impiety whatsoever. And indeed there was good Reason for so doing; For how many Men may we observe in the World, who divide their Services between God and the Devil? Half Saints and Half Sinners! Too Day most Religiously Devout, too Morrow as notoriously Profane. But what an Inconsistency in Practice is here? This is nothing less than to Worship God, and to Blaspheme Him, to Reverence and Affront Him at the same Time. There lays an Obligation then upon every Man who would Live and Die well, not only to abstain from all Manner of Evil whatsoever, but to follow the Advice of St. Paul, and to abstain even from the least Shadow and Appearance of it.

This therefore is what is next Remarkeable in the Advice of the Apostle; *viz.* That a Man should not only deny Ungodliness; but that he should deny *All Ungodliness*; *i. e.* All Kinds and Degrees of it; That he should not only keep himself Innocent from the more Enormous and Crying Sins, but that also he should keep off from the Infection of Lesser Evils; That he should take care not only that he give no Ill Example or Offence by a more Open and Publick Misbehaviour, but that also, That he be guilty of no Private and Secrer Sins. All the Transgressions of this Last kind, which a Man can be guilty of, are a Tacit Impeachment both of the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God, and do in Fact suppose that he do's not see them.

I shall now go on to the Second Moral Vertue requir'd of us; and that is *Justice* towards Men. The Apostle's Exhortation is, That *Denying all worldly lusts we should walk Righteously or Justly*. And the Reason why he enjoyns Men to deny in the first place all *Worldly Lusts*, that is all Immoderate Love of the Things of this World, is this; That it is next to an Impossibility for a Worldly and a Covetous Man to act with any Regard to Justice to Another. The Sin of Avarice and Duty of Honesty are Incompatible. It is ill trusting to the Uprightness and fair-dealing of a Self-interested Man, who has no other Pretence to Justice, than barely by Discoursing of it, in order to deal unjustly by you.

There is no Occasion to explain to any Man, wherein the Nature either of Distributive or Commutative Justice doth consist; because the Nature and Obligations to these Duties are Obvious to the meanest Capacity. It is One of the First Principles of the Law of Nature, and there is no Man so Ignorant as not to know it; That to do Justly, is to *Give to every Man his Due*. This is farther enforced by Revelation; *Render therefore to all their Due, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour*, Rom. 13. 7. To pay Tribute is a piece of Justice due to our Prince. To honour our Parents, and obey our Superiours is a Duty owing to them. In our Bargains and Contracts with each other, there ought to be no Cozening, or Over-reaching, or Taking Advantage of the Ignorance or Necessity of our Brethren. In the Distribution of our Charity and Publick Benefactions the Obligations to Justice rise higher. The Intention of the Donour, and the Merit of the Person ought Principally to be consider'd. All the Regards of
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Friendship, Relation, and Interest ought to be laid aside. This is the Judgment of the Wise Man, *Learn Righteousness ye that judge the Earth.* and St. James laments the Unhappy Case of Unjust Men in these Words; *Behold the Hire of the Labourers, which have reap'd down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth, and the Cries of them which have reaped have enter'd into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth,* Jam. 5. 4.

The next Moral Vertue to be consider'd is *Sobriety*, or *Temperance*: Now all Worldly Lusts, and Inordinate Desires are no less Opposite to this Vertue than they are to Justice and Holiness. A Temperate and Sober Man lays a Restraint upon his Inclinations, and how Craving and Covetous they may be, he resolves with a true Christian Courage to mortifie and subdue them.

To *Walk Soberly* in the Scripture above cited, is not only to avoid the Shameful and Prevailing Sin of Drunkenness, but also to observe a Temperance and Moderation in whatsoever we Eat also; so that a Man shall govern himself according to the Rules of Decency and Religion, and not according to the Unreasonable Demands of an Unsatiabie Appetite. The Examples of the Great and Wealthy, in this Respect have no Influence upon a Sober Man, who takes the Measures of all his Actions not from a Consideration of the Quality and High Station of the Persons who act so and so, but from a Judgment of the Reasonableness and Fitness of the Thing to be Done. The Wisdom of *Agur* was in nothing more Conspicuous than in that Petition he made to God, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches; Feed me with Food convenient for me,* Prov. 30. 8. And St. Paul exhorts all Men to the same Purpose; *Having Food and Raiment let us be therewith content,* 1 Tim. 6. v. 8. The Observation of the
Apostle

Apostle convinc'd him, no doubt on'r, that Riches and Abundance are many times too Powerful Temptations to Luxury and High Living. Our Blessed Saviour who was Divine Wisdom itself has declar'd that the State and Condition of the Poor Man, upon this Account, is Preferable to that of the Rich. *Blessed are ye Poor, and Wo unto you that are Rich,* Luke 6. 20. 24.

That a Man's Excesses therefore, and Intemperance may not fly in his Face at his Last Hour, Let him not follow the Inclinations of those who give themselves up to Brutality and Appetite, and are so immers'd in Flesh and Sense, that they have scarce any Relish of any thing but what they See or Taste. Whatsoever he expends in the Gratification of his Palate, let him Consider that this might have been lay'd out with greater Advantage in Private Charities and Publick Benefactions. And that he may raise his Thoughts above the Pleasures of Sense, let him look to those Entertainments suited to a Spiritual Appetite, *such as neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive; Waiting for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

C H A P. VII.

The Seventh Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is This; That a Man maintain a Constant Intercourse with God by Prayer.

THE Precepts hitherto mention'd for *The Art of Dying well*, have been wholly deriv'd from a Consideration of the Three Theological Graces, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*; And also from the Three Moral Virtues of *Godliness, Justice, and Temperance*; I shall now descend more Particularly to a Consideration of those Duties which are the Natural and Moral Consequences of those Virtues, and have a near Resemblance to them: and those are *Prayer, Fasting, and Giving of Alms*. For as the Duty of *Godliness* relates to God, That of *Justice* to our Neighbour, and That of *Temperance* to ourselves; so does also *Prayer or Devotion*, which is a Religious Act, relate also to God; as does *Alms giving*, which is an Act of Mercy, relate to others, and *Fasting*, which is an Act of *Abstinence*, relate to ourselves. The Subject of *Prayer* has been often Treated of by many Learned and Devout Men. The Method I shall observe at Present, as being the most useful Way of Discourſing on that Duty, shall be to consider, *First*, the Necessity and Obligation every Man has to perform it. *Secondly*, The Great Advantages of it; and *Thirdly*, the Good Qualifications that ought to attend it.

Now the Necessity of *Prayer* will fully Appear, if we consider either the Wants of Men, or the Power and Goodness of God. For altho' God by Virtue of His Omniscience has a Full and Perfect Knowledge of

all the Wants and Necessities of Mankind; yet that Men might not set too small a Value upon his Gifts and Dispensations, or live in a State of Impiety and Indevotion, or not Acknowledge their own Insufficiency or Dependance upon him; I say God, for these Reasons, has thought fit to appoint Prayer as the Ordinary Means of obtaining any Spiritual or Temporal Blessing they may have Occasion for. It is therefore enjoyn'd in *St. Luke, That Men ought always to pray, and not to faint, Luke 18. 1.* And again *Chap. xxi. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always,* and *St. Paul* to the same Purpose; *Pray without Ceasing, 1 Thes. v. 17.* The Meaning of which, and other Texts of the like Form of Expression is not that a Man should employ his whole Time in so Important a Duty, or in Truth such a Portion of it, as would disengage him from other Necessary, and indeed Unavoidable Businesses of Life; but only that he should never be Unmindful of the Obligations of this Duty, that he should always keep himself in a right Frame and Disposition of Mind for the Performance of it; and *Lastly*, That he should upon all proper Emergencies and Occasions be ready and willing to Exercise himself in it. This Sense of these Precepts is easily Justify'd by the Example of our Saviour and his Apostles; for neither of them did ever so wholly addict themselves to Prayer and Devotion, (tho' None did ever more constantly practice that Duty) so as to omit the Promulgation of the Gospel, and to confirm the Truth of it by Signs, and Wonders, and all the Supernatural Evidences of a Divine Power; And yet they might not improperly be said to *Pray always*, because they kept up to a daily and constant Exercise of it. This Interpretation of those Texts before
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cited is also vindicated by the Exposition of the Like Way of Speaking in other Passages of Scripture. Thus where we read, *My Eyes are Ever looking unto the Lord, and his praise shall Ever be in my Mouth*, Psal. 24. 33. And that Text mention'd by St. Luke, of those who were Witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection, *That they were Continually in the Temple praising and blessing God*, Vers. 53. The Words in all these Places import only a Frequency in so doing.

I proceed now to consider the Great Advantages of Prayer and Devotion, and the First I shall mention is This; That Prayer is a Duty Acceptable to God, and Entitles us to his Favour. *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in Secret, and thy Father which seeth in Secret, shall Reward thee openly*, Mat. vi. 6. These Words, tho' they mention Secret Prayer in Particular, yet are they not Exclusive of Publick Devotion; for it is certain that our Saviour himself pray'd in Publick, when he rais'd *Lazarus* from the Dead; but are only a Prohibition of a Pharisaical and Hypocritical Way of Praying in Publick, to be seen of Men, and of that Ostentation and Vain-glory which Men may Affect by so doing. The Expression here mention'd *That he shall Reward thee openly*, imports; That God takes Notice of the Prayers of good Men, that he hears them with Pleasure, and will return them with his Bounty. That Prayer is a Duty Instrumental to the obtaining all the Blessings of what Kind soever we may have Occasion for, St. Chrysostom does very Elegantly set forth in his Two Books of Prayer, in comparing it by a very proper Similitude to that Help and Assistance which Men receive from the Use of their

own Hands. For as Man who is born in a State of Nakedness, and Poverty, wholly incapable to Defend himself, and yet in the greatest Want of Defence, lays under the highest Obligations to God for bestowing his Hands upon him, and allowing him the Proper Use of them, by which he is capable of Maintaining himself in all the Conveniences and Necessities of Life; so does he, as considered in a Spiritual Capacity, and as Depending wholly upon the Divine Providence, lay under the strongest Ties of Gratitude and Acknowledgement to Reverence and Adore that Power, which has pleas'd to instruct Prayer as the necessary Means of deriving upon him, not only all Temporal, but also all Spiritual Blessings whatsoever. And besides this Considerable Advantage of Prayer, in Recommending us to the Favour of God, I shall briefly take Notice of many other Inferiour Advantages which always attend it. As in the first Place, There is no Duty which does so much Enlighten the Minds of Men, and clears them from all that Darkness and Confusion, which Sin and Error cast upon them, as does Prayer and Devotion. As the Royal Psalmist, Psalm cxlvij. In the next Place, this Duty does extend to a Holy and constant Confidence in God, for the most frequently any Man addresses himself to God in Prayer, the more Reason he hath to assure himself of his Providence. 'Tis another Advantage of Prayer in the Third Place, that it Raises and Increases in us the Love of God, and Provokes us to Worship him with High and aspiring Affections, with Elevated Hearts and Minds, with Holy and Heavenly Desires. The 4th Advantage of it is, That it Teaches us Humility and Lowliness of Mind,

as being conscious of our own Weakness and Imperfections, and the Mighty Power and All-Sufficiency of God. For whosoever Petitions God for the Supply of his Wants, does in Effect Acknowledge himself to be no better than a Beggar, and this Consideration throws him into a Mean Opinion of himself, of his Natural and of his Morals, of his Acquirements and of his Performances; and makes him Cautious how he Approaches that Almighty Presence, upon whom he entirely depends for every Thing he wants. Again; The Constant Exercise of Prayer and Devotion begets at last in a Man a Contempt of all Sensual and Worldly Enjoyments whatsoever: For no Man who Maintains a Daily Intercourse with God by Prayer, and lives in a continual Meditation of Heaven and Heavenly Things, but must be entirely Lost and Dead to all Earthly Satisfaction. In the 6th Place this Duty creates in us an inexpressible Delight and Joy; and this is evident from hence, that History affords us many Examples of Primitive Devotion, who continued whole Days and Nights in the Exercise of Devotion. In the 7th and last Place; The Performance of this Duty is no less Honourable, than it is Pleasant: For what greater Dignity can God bestow upon Man, than thus to admit him into a Conference with himself? What more Valuable Privilege can He be entitl'd to, than thus to hold Communion, I may say, a Spiritual Correspondence with God?

I proceed now 3^{dly}. To consider the Good Qualifications that ought to attend this Duty: For as our Saviour assures us; *Ask, and it shall be given you, Seek, and ye shall find, &c.* For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, Luke xi. 9, 10. But that

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the whole Success and Grant of our Prayers depends upon the Performance of such and such Conditions, St. *James* convinces us, when he tells us, *That Men may ask, and receive not; because they ask amiss*, James iv. 3. This therefore is the Force of the Argument; He that desires of God that he may live a Holy and a Virtuous Life, shall obtain his Petitions; and whosoever Desires of God the Duty of Perseverance in Well-doing, till the Time of his Death, shall Consequently receive Eternal Life. That we may Practice this Duty therefore with a just Regard to a Holy Life, and a Happy Death, I shall consider those Conditions and Qualifications which ought to Accompany our Devotions.

Now the First Qualification, I shall mention, of True Prayer is *Faith*; or a Firm Belief and Persuasion of Mind, that God will give us the Thing we ask for; or what He himself shall judge most Proper and Convenient for us. The first Instance of our Faith in this Respect is, to Believe that God is; The Second to Believe that he is Able and Willing to relieve us. *For how shall they call on him, in whom they have not believ'd?* says St. *Paul*, Rom. x. 14. And St. *James*; *But let a Man ask in Faith, nothing Wavering*, James i. 16. Now the Necessity of Faith in Order to perform Rightly the Duty of Prayer, is not to be so Explain'd; as that every Man lays under the Obligation of Believing, That God will Answer his Petitions, in granting every Thing which he may Ask of him; For God, for Reasons best known to Himself, does many Times with-hold the Favours we may Request of Him, and that too very often in Kindness to us. Such a Particular Faith as This, is not expected of the Devout Petitioner; but only a General Belief; That God is a
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most Powerful, most Knowing, most Merciful, and a most Holy Being ; and consequently, That he is Able and Willing, and that he Knows in what Manner to Relieve us ; I mean in whatsoever it may be Proper for him to Give, or for us to Receive. This General Faith was What was requir'd of the Two Blind Men, when they desir'd our Saviour to Heal them, *Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this ?* Mat. ix. 28. The same Kind of Faith it was, which *David* pray'd with, when he implor'd God in Behalf of his Sick Son ; That he did not Pray with a Firm Belief, That he would grant him the Particular Thing he Pray'd for, is plain from his own Words ; *Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the Child may live ?* 2 Sam. xii. 22. i. e. I am not sure that I shall Prevail by my Prayers, however I will not be Wanting in the Means appointed, and leave the Success of all to God. It was with such a Self-resigning Faith which *St. Paul* pray'd, when he besought God, *That the Messenger of Satan might depart from him,* 2 Cor. xii. 8. It is certain in this Instance, that *St. Paul* pray'd with *Faith*, which we may reasonably conclude had been False and Ill-grounded, had he Believ'd that God would have Answer'd him in That Request ; for it is plain from the Event of the whole, That he did not Obtain what in so particular a Manner he petition'd for. 'Tis with this General Belief, That the Church Herself prays for *All Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks* ; and yet 'tis certain that Her Prayers are not always Answered in Their Conversion.

A Second Qualification necessary for the Right Performance of the Duty of Prayer, is *Hope*, or a modest Trust in God, that he will Answer our Petitions in
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the very Particular Instances we shall Desire of him. For altho' no Man ought by a strong Faith, which is an Act only of the Understanding, to Determine God as it were to a Particular Concession of whatsoever he may Ask; yet I can see no Reason why any Man may not have a well grounded Hope, which is an Action of the Will, in the Goodness of Divine Providence, and a Firm Confidence that God will Return his Prayers, as to what may be particularly desir'd of him. This Qualification of Prayer St. Paul requires of all Men, where he says, *Let us therefore come Boldly, i. e. with a Firm Trust and Confidence to the Throne of Grace,* Heb. iv. 16. And the Royal Psalmist introduces God Speaking after this Manner, *I will deliver him because he hath trusted in me.* It is for this Reason, that when the Holy Scripture Mentions any Thing concerning Faith, it many Times subjoyns something of our Trust and Confidence in God. Hence it is that we read in St. Mark, *That whosoever shall say unto this Mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the Sea, and shall not doubt in his Heart, but shall believe that those Things which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith,* Mark. xi. 23.

A Third Qualification of the Duty of Prayer is a General Righteousness; or such a Constant Habitual Holiness as is Consistent with a State of Weakness and Temptation. 'Tis unreasonable to suppose that God will bestow his Benefits upon those who are at Enmity with him. This is abundantly confirm'd by the Royal Psalmist, *The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers,* Psal. xxxiv. 15. And in another Place, *If I incline unto Wickedness in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me,* Psal. lvi. 16. In

the *New-Testament* we have this Assurance from our Lord ; *If ye abide in me, and my Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,* John xv. 7. And St. *John* very fully to the same Purpose ; *Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments,* 1 John iii. 21, 22. This was the Case of the *Publican* in the Gospel. This Man went Home Justify'd, upon his Addresses to God for the Remission of his Sin, not as a Transgressor, but as a Penitent ; For every Sinner is in a State of Enmity with God, but every Penitent is Entering into Friendship and Favour with him. He that Lives in a State of Sin, does that which is Displeasing to God, but he that begins to Repent, does that which is Pleasing to him ; inasmuch as it is more Acceptable to God that a Man should be Concern'd for, and leave his Vices, than that he should obstinately persist in them.

A Fourth Qualification necessary for the Performance of this Duty of Prayer is *Humility* ; or a Mean and Low Opinion of ourselves, when we Address ourselves to the Great and Incomprehensible Majesty of God.

There is nothing which Disqualifies a Man more for the Receipt of Human Benefits than a Bold and Imperious Way of Asking. We have no Power to Command the Favours of others, and whenever we attempt it, we many times suffer for our Presumption. Now if the Case stands thus with Regard to Men, how ought it to Rise in Proportion with Respect to God ? There is an infinite Disparity both with Relation to the Person we ask the Favour of, and in the Favour it self. This Virtue of Humility, as it relates to Prayer, consists

First in Disclaiming all Right, or Pretence of Merit to the Bounty and Munificence of God; And 2^{dly}, in Submitting ourselves entirely to his Providence, both with Respect to the Benefit to be bestow'd upon us, and the Measures of it. *The Prayer of the Humble*, saith the Son of *Sirach*, *pierceth the Clouds, and will not depart, till the most high Regard*. And in the 66th of *Isaiab*, Ver. 2. *To this Man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is of a pure and contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word*.

A Fifth Qualification of Prayer is a strict *Attention of Mind*, or a Watchfulness over our Thoughts in our Addresses to God. Now this is so Necessary to the Performance of this Duty, That it may not improperly be term'd the Life, and Spirit of all Devotion; as Excluding from thence all Carelessness and Indifference, all *Calmness* and Negligence; and Implying a Strong and Vigorous Exercise of all the Faculties of the Soul in the Discharge of it. It was a severe Reprehension, that of God by the Prophet *Isaiab*, *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me*, Chap. xxix. 13. Now this Duty of *Watchfulness* and Attention of Mind proceeds from an Active, Powerful, and a Lively Faith. For whosoever thorowly considers himself not only as a *Creature*, but also as a *Sinful Creature*, and Contemplates on the other Hand the Infinite, Adorable, and Inconceivable Majesty of God, it will be Impossible for him under so mighty a Reflection, not to be inflam'd with the Highest Transports of Reverence and Devotion:

I shall subjoyn upon this Subject Two Remarkable Passages taken out of the Ancient Fathers. The First is that of St. *Jerom*, in his Dialogue against the *Luciferians*.

rians. I ought to actuate, says he, all my Devotions with a Lively Faith; If I were sincere in my Faith, I should cleanse this impure Heart of mine with which I behold my Lord and Saviour, I should beat my Breast, I should overwhelm my self with Weeping, I should Tremble and look Pale under the Sense of my own Guilt, I should Prostrate my self at my Saviour's Feet; Besprinkle them with my Tears, and wipe them with the Hair of my Head, I should Cling to the Foot of his Cross, and never Desist from my Embraces, till he look'd down with an Eye of Pity and Compassion upon me. But alas! In how different a Manner do I behave my self in the Time of my Devotions? How are my Thoughts employ'd about worldly Concerns? The Pleasures, the Diversions, the Profits and Preferments of Life Engross my Soul, and I am wholly taken up in my Reflections upon such Things, as it were a shame even to mention. Oh, how Lifeless is my Faith! How unactive my Hope! How weak my Attention! Where is that Fervency and Zeal, which should enliven my Prayers? Did the Penitent Thief upon the Cross? Did the Three Children in the Burning Furnace? Did the Prophet Daniel in the Lions Den? Did other Devout Saints and Martyrs of God pray after this Manner? To the same Purpose has St. Bernard very Seraphically expressed himself in his Discourse on Prayer. 'Tis our Duty, says he, at the Time of Prayer, to enter with our Devotions the Heavenly Court, in which the King of Kings sits upon a starry Throne, surrounded with an Innumerable Attendance of Blessed Spirits. With what Awe, with what Humble Reverence, with what Holy Fear does it become us to approach him, when we soar upon the Wings of Devotion into his Presence, into the Assembly of Angels, and the Council of Just Men made Perfect? In

all our Actions therefore, concludes he, there is a Necessity for Watchfulness and Attention, but especially in the Exercise of Prayer and Devotion.

A Sixth Qualification necessary for the Right Performance of this Duty of Prayer is *Perseverance*, by which is understood a Frequent Exercise of, and a Constant Attendance upon this Duty. The Necessity and Obligation to *Perseverance* is enforc'd by Two Parables in St. Luke's Gospel: The First is of the Man who went to his Friend at Midnight. The Request of the Petitioner, 'tis true, was but Small, and at first but little Regarded; but the Importunity and Continuance of his Address prevail'd at last over the Good Nature of his Friend, Luke xi. 5. &c. Yet because of his Importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth, Luke xi. 8. The Second is the Parable of the Importunate Widow. The Judge was prevail'd upon by her Perseverance; and tho' in other Respects he neither fear'd God, nor regarded Man, i. e. had been Guilty of Impartiality and Injustice, yet by her Repeated Solicitations he was mov'd to give Judgment in her Favour. The Justice and Goodness of God are Both of them Arguments Sufficient for a Religious Perseverance in Prayer. The Character given of God by St. James is, *That he giveth to all Men Liberally, and upbraideth not, Ja. 1. 5.* that is, doth not upbraid their Importunity, or think that they can be too Urgent in their Addresses to him; for God is infinitely Rich, and Merciful without Measure. St. Austin's Exposition of the last Verse of the 66th Psalm, viz. *Praised be God who hath not cast out my Prayer, nor turn'd his Mercy from me,* is very Observable; *If you are not so far Wanting to your self, says he, as to Desist from Praying, God will not be so Unmerciful to you, as to Desist from Giving.*

C H A P. VIII.

The Eighth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is; To Exercise the Duty of Fasting.

IN Discourſing upon this Subject, I ſhall Omit all unneceſſary Diſputes, which have been rais'd about it, and come cloſe to ſuch Conſiderations as may be Uſeful and Beneficial to Mankind; and therefore in the Firſt Place I ſhall conſider the *Obligations* we have to Religious *Faſting*. 2^{dly}. I ſhall take Notice of the *Uſefulneſs* and *Serviceableneſs* of it to the Purpoſes of Religion; and 3^{dly}. I ſhall conſider the *Manner* of its Performance.

Now the Obligations we have to Religious Faſting, are Evident from the Law of God. There being no Poſitive Precept left by our Saviour about *Faſting*, ſome have thence concluded it a Matter of Liberty, and not a Neceſſary Duty. Now the Reaſon why there is no Exprefs Precept for this Duty, is, as I conceive, This, *viz.* That there was no Neceſſity for any Command to enforce it, it being no leſs known and practis'd by all Good Men, than *Prayer* and *Giving of Alms*; with which it is joyned in our Saviour's Excellent Sermon upon the Mount, *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thy Head, and waſh thy Face: That thou appear not unto Men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in Secret, and thy Father which ſeeſt in Secret ſhall reward thee openly*, Mat. xvi. 17, 18. In this Diſcourſe our Lord inſtructing his Diſciples in the Principal Duties of the Chriſtian Life, it is not to be Suppos'd he would have mention'd *Faſting*, unleſs he intended that it ſhould be

be look'd upon as a Christian Duty. 'Tis Remarkable farther in this Scripture, that the Duty of Fasting if perform'd as he had prescrib'd, would be accepted of God, and openly Rewarded by him. This is also an Evidence that 'tis a Christian Duty, That it has the very same Promise made to the Regular Practice of it, as there is to *Giving of Alms*, and to *Prayer*. The *Time* and the *Manner* of its Performance, are indeed left to the Authority of the Church, as is that of a Private Fast to every Man's own Prudence and Discretion, but the Duty it self is an Institution of eternal Obligation. 'Tis for this Reason that all Nations, from Ancient Times, have us'd Fasting as a Part of Repentance, and a very Prevailing Means of turning away God's Anger. Thus it was that the *Ninevites* proclaim'd a Fast, and put on Sackcloth from the Greatest of them, even to the Least, that they might deprecate the Wrath of God denounc'd against them, if they turn'd from the Evil of their Ways, for which by these Humiliations they express'd their Repentance, *Jonas* iii. 5, 6.

Thus much for our Obligations to Religious Fasting; I shall consider in the next Place the Usefulness and Serviceableness of it to the Purposes of Christianity. And in the First place this Duty is highly Serviceable to the Great End and Design of Christianity, in that it Prepares and Disposes a Man for Prayer, and Divine Meditation. Thus it was that *Moses* prepar'd himself by a Fast of Forty Days, for a nearer Intercourse with God, *Exod.* 34. The same Space of Time did *Elijah* Fast, to Prepare himself for a Conference with God, on Mount *Horeb*, *1 Kings* xix. Thus also did the Prophet *Daniel*, by a Fast of Three Weeks, Prepare himself to Receive the Divine Revelations made to him. The Church by her
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Authority has thought fit, for the same Reason, to set a-part such and such Days for the more Solemn Observance of this Duty, that her Members might more closely attend upon the Offices of Devotion and Divine Meditation. The Usefulness of *Fasting* to these Holy Purposes are largely insisted on by St. *Athanasius*, in his Book of Virginitie; by St. *Basil* in his First and Second *Discourses* on *Fasting*; and by St. *Ambrose* in his Treatise on the same Subject: But I cannot pass by that Memorable, and Sublime Expression of St. *Chrysostom*, upon this Occasion; *Fasting*, says he, *is the Food of the Soul, it supplies it with Wings, whereby it ascends to God, and exercises itself in the Contemplation of Things that are Invisible.*

But 2^{dly}, Religious *Fasting* is highly Serviceable to the Great End and Design of Christianity, in That 'tis a very Powerful Means to subdue and mortify the Carnal Inclinations of Men. It helps to *keep under or beat down our Body, and to bring it into Subjection*, as St. *Paul* speaks, 1 Cor. ix. 27. It hath something in it in the Nature of a Penal Chastisement, whereby we take a Revenge upon our selves for our Former Intemperance and Excess. The Reasonableness of *Crucifying the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*, to use the Language of St. *Paul*, will evidently appear, if we consider the Weakness of Human Nature in resisting Temptations, the Irregularity of our Passions, or the great Prevalency which the Pleasures of Flesh and Sense have upon Mankind. To Submit both Body and Soul unto the Holy Instruction of the Word of God, St. *Paul* thought so Necessary an Instance of Christian Discipline, that he was afraid he should be lost, and rejected of God if he omitted it. This was the Reason why he

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treated his Body so severely, *Least when he had preach'd to others, he himself should become a Cast-away*, 1 Cor. ix. 27.

But 3dly, Religious *Fasting* is highly Serviceable to the Chief End and Design of Christianity, in that 'tis an Instance of our Worship and Obedience to God. I beseech you, says the Apostle, *by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a Living Sacrifice, Holy, Acceptable to God, for this is your reasonable Service*; that is, 'tis an Act of Worship and Adoration of him, Rom. xii. 1: Of this Particular Worship it is, that St. Luke speaks, when he Records it of Anna the Prophetess, *That she departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fastings and Prayers, Night and Day*, Chap. ii. 37. The Great Council of Nice in her Fifth Cannon calls the Fast of Lent a *Pure and Solemn Offering of the Church to God*. And St. Gregory in his 16th Homily by Observing the Fast of Lent, says he, *we offer the First Fruits and Tenths of our Lives to God*. Religious *Fasting* in the 4th Place is highly Serviceable to the General End and Design of Christianity, in that 'tis an Act of *Humiliation and Repentance*, by which we Abase ourselves in the Sight of God, and Confess ourselves unworthy of the Least of his Mercies, and also Punish ourselves for our former Sins.

That *Fasting* is an Act of *Humiliation*, we learn from the Royal Psalmist. *My Cloathing was Sack-Cloth, I humbl'd my Soul with Fasting*, Psal. xxiv. 13. The ancient Discipline of putting on Sack-Cloth, was an Instance of *Humility*, as it rank'd the Penitent Person with the Meanest of the People. Thus when Abab rent his Cloaths, and put Sackcloth on his Flesh
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and Fasted, it is said of him, *That Ahab humbled himself before the Lord,* 1 Kings xxi. 27. 29.

That *Fasting* is also a Natural Expression of Repentance, it is Unnecessary to Prove. The Prophet Daniel calls it by the Name of Mourning, Dan. x. 2, 3. And what he calls Mourning, and Eating no pleasant Bread, the Angel afterwards in the 12th Verse calls Chastening himself before his God. For no Abstinence or Concern for Sin can deserve the Name of Repentance, but such as is Afflictive; which is so much the Design of Religious Fasting, that they are Words of the same Signification. According to that known Rule among the Jews, *Wheresoever the Scripture Speaks of Afflicting the Soul, it means Fasting.*

The Next Thing to be consider'd is the Manner of Performing a Religious Fast: For no Duty in Christianity is any Ways Acceptable to God, unless a proper Regard be had to the Circumstances of it, and especially as to the Manner of doing it. Now the Manner of Performing this Duty, may Relate either to the Time of Fasting, or to the Measures and Degrees of it. As to the Time of Fasting, the Church has thought fit to appoint the Forty Days of Lent, the Ember Days, at the Four Seasons, the Three Rogation Days being Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Holy Thursday, all the Fridays in the Year except Christmas Day, and the Evens or Vigils preceeding several Saints Days, (See the Common-Prayer at the End of the Calendar.) This is a very Ancient, and no less Useful Appointment of the Church; That Men in Obedience to her Authority should be oblig'd to Examine and Enquire into the Spiritual State and Condition of their own Souls, and with Prayer and Fasting deprecate those Punishments which

either They themselves in their Private Capacity, or the State and Kingdom to which they belong, might justly deserve.

But then there is also a Time allow'd every Christian for *Private Fasting*, which is nothing else but a Voluntary Imposition, which any Man may lay upon himself, according to the Nature and Circumstances of Things. It is one Season for a Man to Humble himself with *Fasting*, when God shall visit him with any Temporal Punishment, or Affliction. Another Good Opportunity of *Fasting* is, when we are Rich and Full. It is of great Advantage to a Man to Fast in *Times* of Adversity; because it is a Natural Means of bringing him to a Sense of himself, and of those Sins which have Provok'd God to Punish him. It is of no less Importance to him in *Time* of Prosperity and Abundance to subdue his Appetites, and to debar himself the Superfluities of Life; because at that *Time* he is most Inclined to break thro' all the Rules of Decency, Temperance and Moderation. As to the *Manner* of performing *Religious Fasting*, I mean with Regard to the *Measures* and *Degrees* of it, it is necessary that a Man be govern'd by These and the Like Discretionary Rules, *viz.* That he ought to consult his own Temper and Constitution; That in Consequence of this Enquiry he ought to Retrench himself accordingly; That as he ought not by Reducing himself too Low, to unqualify himself for the Exercises of Devotion; so neither, on the other Hand, by too large Concessions to himself, ought he to Launch out into too great a Freedom in Meats and Drinks; That Mortification and Self-denial ought to be the Principal Design of *Fasting*; and that the Observation of That Rule only will sufficiently direct him as to the Quality of what he ought to allow himself the Time

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of Forbearance, and all other Circumstances which Relate to a Regular Discharge of this Duty.

But before I finish this Chapter, it is Fitting that I give a Caution against a very Common and Prevailing Practice; and that is, That in the *Time of Fasting*, Men would likewise Abstain from all Sports and Diversions, especially from all Quarrels and Disputes; but most of all, from all wanton Merriment and unreasonable Pleasure. This Practice is severely reprimanded by the Prophet *Isaiab*, *Behold in the Day of your Fast ye find Pleasure; Behold ye Fast for Strife and Debate, ye shall not Fast as ye do this Day, to make your Voice to be heard on High*, Chap. lviii. 3, 4. This Caution is highly Necessary to be observ'd, if we would have our *Fasting* to be either Acceptable to God, or Advantagious to ourselves.

CH A P. IX.

The Ninth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is; To be Charitable to others in the Distribution of our Alms,

IN Discourfing on the Subject of *Alms-giving*, because I know of no Better, I fhall obferve the fame Method as Before. In the 1st. Place then, I fhall fhew that 'tis a Necessary Duty. 2^{dly}. I fhall confider the Good Confequences which follow fuch a Practice; And 3^{dly}, I fhall take Notice in *what Manner* it ought to be done. It was never yet made a Queftion, whether a Man fhould be Charitable and Beneficent to thofe who are in Want. How Great a Stress is laid upon the Performance of it, is fufficiently Evident from hence,

That the Final Sentence which shall be pass'd upon Wicked Men at the Day of Judgment, is made to depend Principally upon our Charity. *Depart from me ye Cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil, and his Angels; For I was an Hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was Thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; Naked and ye Cloathed me not; Sick and in Prison, and ye visited me not, Mat. xxv. 41, 42, 43.* and a little after it is added, *Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me, Vers. 45.* From which Scripture it is observable, that no Man is oblig'd to Acts of Charity to others, but those who are in a Capacity, I mean with Relation to their Circumstances, to Perform it. For our Blessed Saviour, who in all other Instances was the most Perfect Pattern of Charity that ever liv'd upon the Earth, yet by Reason of his Meanness and Poverty, we read in no Part of Scripture, that he ever Contributed any Thing to the Necessities of others, of what was strictly his own, but only was pleas'd to Order that a Share of what he had receiv'd from them might be given to the Poor. This is farther confirm'd from that Expression of our Lord to Judas the Traytor, *That thou doest, do quickly, John xiii.* The Comment of his Disciples upon that Place was; That as Judas kept the Bag, he should, as by Direction from our Lord, give something to the Poor.

Many Eminent Divines have differ'd in their Opinions concerning this Duty, viz. As to what Commandment of the *Second Table* they should Rank it under. Some have plac'd it under the 5th, others under the 6th. But if I may deliver my own Sentiments upon this Point, I must confess that I see no Necessity why it should

should be Compriz'd under any one of them; because, in my Opinion, the Moral Duties of the *Second Table* are not, at least so Properly Precepts of *Charity*, as they are of *Justice*: However, if it must be allow'd to be a Particular Branch of any One, I think it ought to be either of the Eighth, *Thou shalt not Steal*; Because 'tis a Kind of Theft and Robbery not to give to the Poor that which they have a Right to, and which God has appointed for them; or else of the Fifth, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*. For the Word *Honour*, in this Place, does not only Imply an Awful Reverence of their Persons, and an Entire Obedience to their Commands; but does Import also, as an Instance of our Duty to them, an Assistance of them in their Necessities, and a Procurement of such Things as are the Support and Maintenance of Life. This is a Piece of *Charity* which we owe to our Parents, who according to St. *Jerom's* Exposition on the 23th of St. *Matthew*, are in the Highest Sense our *Neighbours*. I would only Remark one Thing farther, which is; That the Duty of *Charity*, or Giving of *Alms*, is not a Negative, but a Positive Command: But among all the Moral Precepts of the *Second Table*, there is but one Positive Command, and that is the *First*: However, I Leave every Man to his own Judgment in this Matter; and go on to consider,

2^{dly}, The Good Consequences which flow from the Practice of this Duty.

And 1st. This Duty of *Charity* and *Beneficence* to the Poor and Needy is *Highly Pleasing and Acceptable to God*; infomuch, as I before observ'd, that he makes the Final Sentence of the Last Judgment to depend upon it, *Come ye Blessed of my Father*, says our Saviour, *Inbe-*

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rit the Kingdom prepared for you. For I was an Hungred, and ye gave me Meat, &c. Mat. xxv. 34, 35. Nay, this Duty is so highly Acceptable to God, that he Looks upon all Offices of Charity and Compassion to our Poor Brethren, as Instances of Kindness to Himself. Inasmuch as ye have done it, unto the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me, Vers. 40.

That God is highly pleas'd with this Duty, is farther Evident from hence; That 'tis so often Commanded by Him. The whole Christian Religion is an Institution of Love; of the Love of God to Man; of Man, to his Fellow-Creatures. Not only Nature prescribes the Laws of Tenderness and Compassion, but Religion falls in with Her Sympathies, and Raises the Generous Principles of Pity and Commiseration to the Highest Degrees of Comeliness and Perfection.

That God is highly pleas'd with the Exercise of *Charity* and *Beneficence* is Plain in the 3^d Place, from hence also, That he has annex'd the Reward of Eternal Happiness to the Practice of it, *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy*, says our Saviour in his Divine Discourse on the Mount, *Matth. v. 7.* The Duty of Mercy is attended with such Peculiar Engagements, that it does not only Recommend a Man to the Favour and Compassion of others, but Entitles him also to the Mercy and Kindness of God. God who is Himself infinite Beneficence and Love, has a Particular Regard for Those who imitate Him in this most Amiable, most Adorable Perfection.

But 2^{dly}, Another Good Consequence of *Charity* and *Beneficence* to the Distress'd and Afflicted Part of Mankind is; That it Creates in us a Spiritual Complacency, and a Devout Confidence in God. For altho'

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the Performance of every Good Action does Naturally raise in the Mind or Conscience of Man a Holy Triumph and Exaltation, and gives him a reasonable Assurance of the Divine Favour, yet is there no Virtue which gives him so Peculiar a Pleasure as Christian Mercy. The Satisfaction which Springs from a Sense of having Reliev'd the Calamities and Sufferings of Mankind is a Spiritual Feast; and 'tis a Refreshment to our *own* Bowels, to have Reliev'd the Bowels of the Poor. *Alms is a good Gift, unto all that give it in the Sight of the most High, Tob. iv. 11.* And St. Paul speaking to the *Hebrews*, Chap. x. 34, 35. has these Words, *Ye had Compassion of me in my Bonds; Cast not away therefore your Confidence which hath Great Recompence of Reward.* St. Cyprian also, in his Discourse of *Alms-giving*, is pleas'd to call it, *The Great Comfort and Refreshment of the Faithful.*

A 3^d Good Consequence which flows from the Exercise of *Charity* is; That such a Kind Compassionate Temper of Mind recommends a Man to the Esteem and Good-will of others. The most Effectual Way to be Below'd by others, is to Love them. "If a Generous Friend relieve me with his Alms, I will Return the Favour with my Prayers. If he is a Sinner, I will pray for his Conversion; If he is a Good Man, I will Pray for his Perseverance; For Both I will Pray for a Sufficiency of all Worldly Blessings; for the Increase of Grace, and the Attainment of Glory. In this Justifiable Sense will I make to my self Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that when I fail, they may Receive me in Everlasting Habitations.

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Fourthly; Another Good Consequence which flows from a Charitable and Beneficent Temper is; That 'tis oftentimes a Religious Means of our Thriving and Prospering in the World, and Improving our Substance. I do not say, That a Man ought to be Charitable to others upon so Selfish a Principle, but only that God has annex'd such and such Conditions of Prosperity and Success in their Worldly Affairs, to those who are Open-hearted and Bountiful to the Poor, *He that hath Pity upon the Poor; lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given him, he will pay him again, Prov. xix. 27. And again, Chap. xxvii. 27. He that giveth to the Poor, shall not lack.* The Design of the Parable of the *Five Loaves and Two small Fishes*, after the Feeding of Five Thousand, Multiplied into Seven Baskets full of Fragments, is to Teach us; *That the Distribution of our Charity, especially to Good Men, shall be Rewarded with a Great Increase.*

The Handful of Meal, and the little Oyl in a Cruse which the Widow of *Zarephath* gave to *Elijah* was increas'd into a Sufficiency for many Days, and that so Eminent a Piece of Charity might be Recorded to Posterity, 'twas Distinguish'd by a Miracle, *1 Kings xvii. 16.* There are many other Remarkable Instances of this Kind in *St. Cyprian*, in his Discourse of *Alms-giving*; and *St. Basil* in his *Address to the Rich*, in a very Elegant Similitude, compared Riches to the Waters of a Well, which the more they are drawn off, they rise with Greater Clearness, and in more Abundance. There is a Sort of Infatuation in Covetousness, and 'tis very Difficult to Convince a Rich Man of the Truth of this Doctrine; a Discourse upon *Charity* is but an Indifferent Entertainment to these Men; there's no Sense in

in Parting with what they have ; but alas, the Time is Coming, when it will be too late either to Believe or Practice this Duty.

The Last Thing to be consider'd is the Manner of Bestowing our Charity. For as Prudence and Discretion are of great Service to Mankind, in the Guidance and Regulation of all Moral Actions, so are they Particularly Necessary in the Direction and Disposal of our Charity.

And in the First Place, a Great Regard in the Disposal of our Charity ought to be had to our own Intentions in Doing it ; that is, That it be not Done out of a Principle of Popularity, and a sordid Affectation of Applause, but out of a Religious Design of Pleasing God ; and as an Instance of our Love to him, To be Serviceable and Beneficial to others. *When thou doest an Alms, says our Saviour, do not sound a Trumpet as the Hypocrites do ; nor let thy Left-Hand know what thy Right-Hand doth, Matt. vi. 2, 3.* St. Austin in his Exposition of this Scripture informs us, That by the Left-Hand we ought to understand the Bad Intentions of Men ; in being Charitable and Beneficent merely out of Vanity and Ostentation, or a Prospect of any other Temporal Interest and Advantage ; and that by the Phrase of the Right-Hand, we ought to understand the Good Intentions of Men, in being Kind and Compassionate to others, upon more Noble and Sublime Principles, viz. The Prospect of Immortality, the Applause of God, and the Service of Mankind.

The 2d Thing to be consider'd with Respect to the Manner of Disposing our Charity, is This ; That it be done with Ease, and Agreeableness, without the least Hesitation or Delay. To shift off an Indigent Man

with Dilatory Excuses, is only to Mock his Sufferings. Our Assistance in this Case many Times comes too late; and the Man is so starv'd before we offer to Relieve him. To be *seasonable* in our Distributions, enhances the Value of the Benefit; For there is no Dallying with Poverty and Want. *With-hold not Good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the Power of thine Hand to do it. Say not unto thy Neighbour, Go, and come again, and To-Morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee,* Prov. iii. 27, 28. The Hospitality of *Abraham* and *Lot*, with the Frankness and open Manner of Expressing it, is Recommended to our Imitation, Gen. 18, 19. This was also the Practice of *Tobit*, in his 8th Chapter. He prevented the Poor in their Requests to him, and would not give them a Liberty so much as to ask him.

A 3^d Qualification requir'd in the Distribution of our *Charity* is That it be done with *Cheerfulness* and *Complacency*, without any Grudging, Complaining or Discontent. To bestow our Benevolence against Inclination, makes it look rather like an Action of Necessity than Choice. Such an unwilling *Charity* can never be Interpreted to Proceed from One of the most Christian and Commendable Motives to it, viz. a Consideration of the Miseries, and Afflictions, and Wants of Mankind. In every Gift, says the Preacher, *Show a Cheerful Countenance*; which St. Paul does more fully explain in the following Direction, *Let every Man do according as he is dispos'd in his Heart* (but let every Man Dispose his Heart accordingly) *not Grudgingly, or of Necessity; for God Loveth a Cheerful Giver,* 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

A 4th Qualification of Christian Charity is Humility; which, as it Relates to this Duty more particularly, consists, *First*, in a Just Acknowledgment of the Favours and Mercies which the Charitable Man receives from God. *2dly*, In a Lowly Opinion of the Unworthiness of the Offering he makes to his Poor Brother for His Sake; And *3dly*, in a Due Sense of the Goodness of God in this; particularly, That he has Receiv'd much more, than he has Bestow'd on others. St. Gregory in his 14th Chapter of his *Moral Discourses*, enlarges with great Strength of Argument to this Purpose. *It will sink the Pride*, says he, of "the most Generous and Charitable Benefactor, if in his Disposal of Earthly Comforts, he duly considers these Words of the Great Proprietor of all Things; Make to yourselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting Habitations. For if we can purchase Heaven by the Assistance of our Riches; that is; By a Liberal Distribution of them to the Necessaries of Others, we ought, no doubt on't, upon the Exercise of our Charity, to Reflect with ourselves; That we are rather making a Present to our Friends and Benefactors, than that we are any Way Supplying the Wants of the Poor.

Fifthly, Another Qualification of Christian Charity and Beneficence, is Bountifulness; by which I mean such a Liberal Disposition of Mind, as provokes a Man to Exert himself in all his Benefactions to the utmost of his Power. To Act in this Manner, is to Answer the Designs of Providence, who has abundantly Bestow'd them. Our Charity in Giving to others, ought to Rise in Proportion to what we have Receiv'd from God; For God gives Much, that Men may Bestow the More.

Be merciful after thy Power. If thou hast Much, give Plenteously. If thou hast Little, do thy Diligence gladly to give of that Little; for so gatherest thou thy self a good Reward in the Day of Necessity, Tob. iv. 8, 9.

St. Chrysostom assures us, That not to give Plenteously, i. e. as far as we are able, is to give Nothing. And in his 37th Discourse to the People of Antioch, he has this Remarkable Passage; Those says he, who Address themselves to God in the Language of David in his 51st Psalm, Have Mercy upon me, O God, after thy Great Goodness, according to the Greatness and Abundance of Their Riches, ought to have Mercy on the Poor.

To conclude this Chapter; If a Man would live Religiously, or Dye Comfortably, he ought either by Reading and Observation, or by having Recourse to the Judgment of Learned and Good Men to satisfy himself in these Important Questions; Namely, Whether he can keep in his Possession the Superfluities of his Income or Estate without Sin? Whether he is not rather oblig'd in Conscience to Give them to the Poor? And again to Enquire farther, What Share or Portion of what we Possess may be call'd Superfluous, and what may in common Estimation be look'd upon as Necessary for the Support and Maintenance of ourselves and Families. This Enquiry is highly Reasonable; Because a moderate Share of Riches may be Superfluous to one Man, whereas a Larger Income may, according to the Difference of his Circumstances, be highly Necessary for the Provision of another. But as it is not the Design of this Discourse to enter into any unnecessary Disputes, but to Improve Men in useful Principles, I shall Briefly set down such Passages of

Scripture, together with the Opinions of Ancient and Modern Writers upon this Head, as will give full Satisfaction to any Reasonable Man.

What I find Recorded in Scripture to this Purpose is, That Text of St. *Matthew* in his 6th Chapter, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*; and in the 3d of St. *Luke*, *He that hath Two Coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath Meat, let him do likewise.* And that other Expression of the same *Apostle* in his 12th Chapter, where it is said to the Man so Superfluously Rich, that he knew not where to Lay his Goods, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee.* These Words are Interpreted by St. *Austin* as a Denunciation of Eternal Punishment upon the Rich Man, for keeping in his own Hands what was unnecessary for Himself, and might have been of great Advantage to Others.

The Reports made by the Ancient Fathers upon This Subject, are Principally These. St. *Basil*, in his Discourse to the Rich, hath these Words; *Are not you, says he, to be accounted a Publick Robber, who Look upon That to be your own, with which you was Entrusted for the Benefit of others?* And immediately subjoins, *By such a Misbehaviour you Injure as many Poor Men, as you are able to Relieve.* St. *Ambrose* in his 81st Discourse Delivers himself Thus; *What, says he, is an Act Injustice, if this be not; Too Tenaciously to keep what is my own, altho' I do not Invade the Property of another.* O Unguarded Expression! To Call any Thing my Own; and a little Lower; 'Tis equally Criminal to with-held your Superfluties from the Needy, as it is to Injure or Defraud any Man of his Right. St. *Jerom* in his Epistle to *Hedibia* does thus Advise her, *If you have more than what is necessary for Food and Raiment, lay it out*
upon

upon the Poor. Consider that in such a Case you are Debtor to them. St. Chrysostom in his 34th Homily to the People of Antioch, says thus, *Is that which you Possess unalienable your Own? You have something of what Belongs to the Poor in your Hands, whether you came to your Estate by Purchase, or by Right of Inheritance.* St. Austin in his Treatise on the 47th Psalm hath these Words; *What is Superfluous to the Rich, is Necessary to the Poor. We Unjustly Detain from other Men what they have a Right to, when we keep to ourselves what is not Necessary for us.* St. Gregory in his 3^d Part of his Pastoral Care, the 22^d Admonition, gives his Opinion Thus; *Those Persons, says he, who neither Covet what is their Neighbours, nor Communicate what is Their Own, ought Carefully to consider with Themselves, that all Men are Entitl'd to the Bounties of Nature, and the Common Productions of the Earth; And that 'tis in vain for any Man to pretend to any Share of Goodness, who claims the General Benefactions of Divine Providence wholly to himself.* And St. Bernard in his Epistle to Henry, an Archbishop of France, *'Tis a Just Charge of the Poor upon Men of Estates, viz. What ye so lavishly throw away in the Pride and Luxury of Life, is Properly Ours; 'Tis want of Christian Compassion that makes you withhold it from us.* And Holy Aquinas of later Date, to the same Purpose, *Whatsoever a Man possesses in Superabundance, is a Debt to the Poor by the Law of Nature; In another Place, God has Commanded not only that a Temp Part, but also whatsoever is unnecessary for our own Support and Maintenance be given to the Poor.* And this Doctrine he vouches to be the standing Opinion of all Divines. I shall conclude this Chapter with one Remark of my Own; and that is, That if
any

any Man shall Question, whether according to the Stress and Rigour of Natural Right, he ought to Act in this Manner, I shall not Dispute it with him, so long as he is oblig'd to do it by the Principles of Christian Charity. When the Case is so Plain, as that I shall be Damn'd upon the Omission of it, I think it is scarce worth my while to Enquire whether I shall suffer for the Breach of any Law of Nature, or for the Want of Christian Compassion.

CHAP. X.

The Tenth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death is; Constantly to Watch over our Senses, and to keep them under a Due Regulation.

THE Five Senses may not improperly be call'd the Gates or Passages thro' which all Kinds of Wickedness enter into the Soul of Man. There is nothing therefore which can conduce more to a Holy Life, and by Consequence to a Happy Death, than a Watchful Observance of these Passages, that we may keep off the Attempts and IncurSIONS of Sin.

The First Sense thro' which Wickedness Enters into the Soul of Man, is the Eye. This is the Gate thro' which all the Sins of Luxury and Concupiscence have their Admission into the Heart and Affections; as is plain from the Words of our Saviour; *But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to Lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart. And if thy Right Eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is Profitable for thee that one of thy Members should perish, and not that thy whole Body should* be

be cast into Hell, Matt. v. 28, 29. This was the Case of David and the Two Elders. The Power and Prevalency of a Beautiful Object in Captivating the Affections, is Great and Inexpressible. We are conquer'd before we are upon our Guard, and have Time to make our Defence. 'Tis this Great Infelicity of Human Nature which the Apostle Laments, when he says; *I see another Law in my Members, warring against the Law of my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in my Members*, Rom. vii. 23. There is in the Christian Warfare a Perpetual Combat between the Flesh and the Spirit; and it requires all the Holy Courage and Bravery of a Soldier of Christ Jesus, to stand his Ground against the Frequent Attacks made upon him this Way.

But however forcible the Temptations of this Kind may be, yet if a Man be not Warring to himself, he may, by the Blessing of God, entirely Master and subdue them. The Afflicting Duties of Abstinence, Mortification, and Self-denial, are a suitable Remedy for this Disease. St. *Austin* in his Hundred and Ninth Epistle, has another Expedient, as well accommodated as This. *Upon whatsoever Object*, says he, *you cast your Eyes, Be sure you do not fix them there too long*. 'Tis impossible for any Man, so long as he has his Eyes in his Head, not to look upon a Beautiful Object when it appears before him; nor do I see any Reason why he may not Behold it, as it is the Workmanship of God, with some Pleasure and Satisfaction; but in my Opinion 'tis Dangerous to Dwell upon the Delightful Prospect, lest it make too deep an Impression upon the Mind, and Engage us in too Ardent a Desire of it. Both Reason and Religion will inform a Man, that he thought not

to throw himself into the Road of Temptation, by seeking after Objects of this Kind; because he may not be sensible how far his Virtue may be a Security to him in an unguarded Hour. If by Chance or Accident he Lights upon the Ensnaring Prospect, Custom and Practice will teach him to avoid the Danger, by Fixing his Eyes upon another Object. This was the Remedy which Holy Job prescrib'd to himself upon the like Occasion; *I have made a Covenant with my Eyes; why then should I think upon a Maid?* Job. xxxi. 1. In this Text he does not express himself so, as if he thought it unlawful to look upon a Woman, but only, that he would not, in our Saviour's Sense, look upon a Woman to Lust after her. He was unwilling to Trust himself too far, for Fear his Sight should allure him into farther Freedom. And the Reason he subjoins for so Prudent and Chaste a Behaviour is worthy of its Author. If I allow'd myself in such unwarrantable Prospects, says he, *What Portion of God is there in me from above?* Vers. 2. As much as if he said, "God is my Whole Portion, the most Amiable Object of my Soul. I can Gaze on his Beauties and Perfections with the Purest Flames of Divine Love; I can Contemplate his Brightness with the most Innocent and Chast Desires. While I thus Exercise my Love to God, I am sure to be Belov'd by him; For God Delights in the Contemplations of a Spotless and Immaculate Soul. The Advice of our Saviour is a no less Effective Remedy against the Encroachments of Concupiscence and Lust, *If thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out*, that is, That you ought to debar yourself the Beholding of such Tempting Objects, as much as if you had lost the Use of your Sight. This is also a Religious Caution against Wantonness and

Immodesty, and expresses the Great Difficulty there is in Reforming the Looseness and Debaucheries of Youth.

But here, and indeed with some Appearance of Reason, it may be Reply'd; What could be the End and Design of Providence in Furnishing this Lower World with so many Agreeable Objects? Why so much Beauty, Comeliness, and Proportion in the Formation of Man and Woman, if we lay under a Prohibition so doubly severe, as neither to Behold nor Admire? **T**he Answer to this Question is Easy, and at Hand; As First, That God has been pleas'd to Institute Marriage as a Religious Means of Preventing the Irregularities and Indecencies of an Unlawful Conversation, and of making our Inclinations Reasonable, by Fixing them upon Proper Objects. The Duty of Love and Affection by this Honourable Appointment, is distinguish'd from the Intemperance of Lust, and to Behold and Love is an Instance of Benevolence and Duty. The Institution of Marriage is as ancient as the Creation. *It is not Good for the Man to be Alone, I will make him an Help-meet for him,* says God, Gen. 2. 18. **T**he End of this Institution is to Prevent Fornication and Adultery. The Commandment under the Old Law was; *Not to Covet the Wife of another Man,* Exod. xx. 17. The Command under the New-Testament is Express and Positive, *Husbands Love your Wives, even as Christ also Loved the Church,* Eph. v. 25.

But 2dly, the Divine Wisdom in all his Allowances and Dispensations has a Regard to the Fittness and Qualification of the Person who is to receive them, and the Suitableness of them to the State and Circumstances of Man. There are many Instances may be given in several other Christian Liberties, to which God has not granted

granted to all Mankind without Distinction, an Equal Right. Whatsoever may be Proper and Expedient for one Man, may be Inconvenient and Prejudicial to another. Whatsoever may be unlawful at one Time, upon a Change of Circumstances, may be justifiable at another. Upon some Objects we may Exercise our Love and our Admiration without Measure, and without Sin, which we cannot do upon others without Hurt to Ourselves, and without Offence to God. The Liberty of Beholding Each other in the Fullness of Beauty and Glory, will be a Part of the Felicity of the Saints; Because we shall then be freed from the Weaknesses of Mortality, and all the Carnal Desires of Flesh and Sense. It is for this Reason that God Indulges the whole Creation in a General Freedom of Beholding the Sun, Moon, and Stars, with whatsoever is Comely and Agreeable in all the Productions of Nature; because there is nothing in them which can provoke in us any unlawful Desires; It is for this Reason that God has thought it Convenient to lay a Restraint upon the Affections of Men, both with Regard to the Objects and Degrees of them.

A Second Sense thro' which Wickedness makes its Entrance into the Soul of Man, is, That of *Hearing*; and therefore ought as Carefully to be look'd to, as that of *Seeing*. Now in Order to keep this Sense under a Due Regulation, it is Necessary that we keep the Tongue under Government and Subjection. For as the Tongue is the Instrument of Speech, whereby our Words, whether Good or Bad, are Convey'd to the Ear, we must take Care in the First Place in what Manner we Express our Sentiments to others. And Because the Tongue is many Times the Cause of much Evil and Mischief to Mankind; and that there are Few Men who

have an Entire Mastery and Dominion over it; There-
fore St. James assures us; *That if any Man offend not in
Word, the same is a Perfect Man*, Chap. iii. 2. And a
little after he adds; *Behold how great a Matter a little
Fire kindleth; and the Tongue is a Fire, a World of Ini-
quity*, Vers. 6. In this Text there are Three Things
worthy our Observation. The *First* is; That 'tis a
Business of Great Difficulty to keep the Tongue under
Good Government; insomuch, that there are but very
Few, and those too Men of some Eminency in Holiness,
who Practice this Duty. 2^{dly}. The Apostle does
here very Elegantly set forth the Great Mischiefs and
Prejudices which arise to others from Calumny and
Detraction, by the Similitude of a *Spark of Fire*; which
in a small Time lays waste a whole Town. For how
Frequently does an Incautious Word, or an Unguarded
Expression inflame a whole Neighbourhood? What
Broils, what Animosities, what Divisions have been
heightn'd and improv'd among Relations and whole
Families, by a Slandrous a Reviling, and a False
Tongue? In the *Last* Place, St. James does also in-
form us, That Evil-Speaking is not one single uncom-
pounded Vice; but that 'tis a Mixture, and Complicati-
on of many Sins; or to use his own Eloquent Expression;
That 'tis a *World of Iniquity*. This is no more than
what Common Experience and Observation assures us
of, namely; That all Publick and Private Mischiefs, of
what Kind or Complexion soever, are either Contriv'd,
or Committed, or Defended by the Tongue. It is for
this Reason also *Secondly*, why the Tongue is call'd a
World of Iniquity; Because by Blasphemy and Perjury,
and all Atheistical Discourse it Sins against God; by
Infamy, Reflexion, and unjust Accusation it is Injurious

to our Neighbour; and *Lastly*, by Lying and Equivocation it is of Fatal Consequence to ourselves.

To this Testimony of *St. James*, I shall add that of the Royal Psalmist, *Deliver my Soul, O Lord, from Lying Lips, and from a Deceitful Tongue*, Psal. cxx. 2. If the Greatness and Authority of a Prince cannot secure him from Calumny and Misrepresentation, how Hard is the Case of Private Subjects, much more of the Necessitous Part of Mankind, as being less unable to Defend themselves against the Insults of Ignominy and Reproach? *What Reward shall be given or done unto thee, thou False Tongue?* does immediately follow, *Vers. 3.* These Words are somewhat Obscure, by Reason of the strict Propriety of the *Hebrew* Tongue; but the Sense of them in my Opinion is This; "I have all the Reason in the World, both in my Publick Capacity, as I am a King, and in my Private Capacity, as I am a Man, to be afraid of any open Falshood and Obloquy, or any more close and Sly Insinuations which may be made against me, or Government, as being fully Sensible how Fatal the Consequences are which attend so Injurious a Practice? The Psalmist's Answer to the Question above-mention'd is; *Even mighty and sharp Arrows with hot Burning Coals*. In this Text, a Deceitful Tongue, by a very Elegant Similitude, is Compar'd to *Mighty and Sharp Arrows*; and that in these Following Respects. For in the *First* Place it is the Nature of Calumny and Evil-speaking, to Wound and Murder at a Distance. *Secondly*, It generally Discharges itself with great Malignity and Force. *Thirdly*, It is too often sharpen'd and pointed with the Keenness both of Malice and Wit; And *Lastly*, it is Compar'd to *Hot Burning Coals*, as Expressing the Wasting and Devour-

Devouring Nature of this Vice. This Description of a False and Beguiling Tongue does very Lively set forth the Injuries and Injustice, and all the Train of Bad Consequences which continually attend Slander and Detraction.

To Evidence the Truth of the Fact more fully, I shall produce Two very Remarkable Instances of this Kind; The First is the Unjust Accusation of the Infamous *Doeg* against *Abimelech* the Priest, for High Treason against *Saul*. The Charge was supported by no Evidence, and in Reality a Downright Falshood; and yet was it very Dreadful and Sanguinary in its Effects. The Credulous King believes the Story; The Innocent Priest was sacrific'd to his Resentment; and the Rest of his Brethren, to the Number of Eighty Five, were slaughter'd upon the same Account. Nor was this the last Tragical Consequence of this impious Charge; A whole City must be destroy'd at once. Men and Women, Children and Sucklings, nay even the Beasts themselves, Oxen, Sheep, and Asses, are all without Distinction the Objects of his Cruelty and Indignation, 1 *Sam.* 22.

[The other Example I shall mention is the *Rash Promise* of *Herod* the King to the Daughter of *Herodias*. To give her whatsoever she should ask, without any Regard to Right or Wrong, was so Precipitate a Promise, that I question whether it was not as Weak, as it was Wicked; but to confirm this Promise with the Solemnity of an Oath, was a farther Degree of Rashness and Infatuation. For the inconsiderate Prince by this Temerity, threw himself into this Fatal Dilemma; Either to be Guilty of Perjury, or Injustice; and to tie himself under

under the Obligation of such an Oath, as he could neither Keep, nor Break without Sin. The Consequences of Acting in this Manner were Proportionable to the Demerit of the Crime ; The *First* Effect of it was the Murder of *John the Baptist*, a Man of Great Innocence and Integrity, by *Herod* himself. The next Bad Consequence of this Oath, was a Bloody and Inhuman Demand of the Mother of the Damsel ; and the Third Ill Effect was the Compliance of the Daughter in so Barbarous a Request. What a Complication of Vices attended the Execution of this Rash Oath ? Let us now consider how Correspondent the Punishment was to the Crime it self. In the *First* Place, *Herod* was Despoil'd of his Authority and Government by *Cajus* the Emperour, and in the Conclusion of the whole had no Share in that Kingdom, the Half of which he had Sworn to give to another, as 'tis confirm'd by *Josephus*, Book 18. Chap. 9. The Daughter of *Herodias*, according to *Callistus's* Account of this Matter, passing over a River in a Frost, sunk into the Ice, and was Drown'd ; and the Mother herself laying to Heart the Sufferings of *Herod*, and the Loss of her Daughter, dy'd with Excess of Grief.

There are several Discretionary Rules prescrib'd by Wise Men, for the good Government of the Tongue, in which every Man's own Prudence may in some Measure Direct him, according to the Different Circumstances of the Case. The Advice given by Holy *David* is, as I conceive, The First and Best Direction to this Purpose. *I said I will take Heed to my Ways, that I offend not in my Tongue*, Psal. xxxix. 1. [The Meaning of which Words is ; That to keep myself Innocent of all the Freedoms and Intemperancies of a Licentious and

and Extravagant Tongue, I will never *Speak* or *Think*, or *Act* any Thing, but with the utmost Caution, and most Mature Deliberation Before-hand. 'Tis this which is the Distinguishing Character of a Man, and which gives him the Preference to Brutes, That he has the Free Exercise of his Reason; That in Consequence of such a Divine Principle within him he can Enquire into the Nature and Circumstances of his own Actions; and That in Consequence of such an Enquiry he can Determine himself according to the Equity and Reasonableness of the Thing to be done. The same Divine Principles is no less a Light and a Direction to him, as to his Thoughts, to his Words, to his Desires, to his Resolutions, and indeed in all the Exercises and Operations of the *Rational Soul*.

If any Man by Reason of the Narrowness of his Circumstances, or the Hurry and Business of the World, should Pretend that he is wholly unqualify'd for such *Premeditations* as These; The Answer is; That let a Man be never so much straitn'd in his Circumstances, or employ'd in Worldly Business and Engagements never so far, yet may he find at least one *Spare Hour* in a Morning for this Purpose. If thro' Want of Judgment and the Weakness of his Understanding, he be any Thing Incapacitated for such Solemn Reflexions, let him Address himself to God by Prayer, Desiring of him that by his Enlightning Spirit he wou'd clear his Understanding, and Direct, Sanctifie, and Govern all his Thoughts, Words, and Works, to his Glory, and his own Salvation. And that he may behave himself in These *Premeditations* with more Regularity and Exactness it will be necessary for him in the Evening also to examine his Conscience thro'ly, and to Demand an Account of himself

himself whether he has any Way Offended by Thinking, or Speaking, or Acting any Thing Contrary to the Known Will of God; and wheresoever he shall discover himself to have misbehav'd, let him not Dare to Compose himself to Sleep, till he has made his Peace with God by a Firm Resolution of Amendment.

3dly. But to come closer to the Argument I am upon; If Men would have such a Reverence and Respect for One Another, as to Manage their Discourse with Decency and Temper, with Precaution and a Strict Regard to Truth, it would be Impossible that any Wickedness should pass into the Soul of Man thro' the Sense of *Hearing*. There are Four Kinds of Discourse Principally which both Reason and Religion will instruct a Man to be alway Observant of, and to Guard against. The *First* is All Prophane and Atheistical Discourse, when Men shall either Deny the Being of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, or shall Impiously Ridicule his Word. When a Man is arriv'd to such a Pitch of Infidelity as This, his Morals will Fall in Course; Because he has no Good Principles to act by. A *Second* Way whereby a Man is Capable of Offending in this Respect is; by Calumny and Slander; When either we speak that Evil of our Neighbour which we know to be False, or altho' it may in some measure be True, yet we either Aggravate and Enlarge it; or if it be capable of a Favourable Interpretation, we shall put the worst Construction upon it. **T**here's a wicked *Curiosity* in Men, which pleases them to hear others abus'd, and a Cruel Delight they take in Censure, and Evil-speaking. *Who so privily slandereth his Neighbour, him will I Destroy*, Psal. ci. is the Heavy Judgment which God Himself has de-

nounc'd against this Prevailing Sin. And because Rail-
lery and Invective is Part of the Entertainment at
Table, and among Publick Company; To prevent so
Scandalous a Practice, St. *Austin* order'd the following
Verses to be fix'd up over his Table, against the Wall.

*The Man in Railing Bold, in Censure Free,
Shall never be a well-come Guest to me.*

A Third Way whereby a Man is capable of Offend-
ing with the Tongue, is by Flattery and Dissimulation;
when either we Compliment Men for those Perfections
which they really Want; or too Highly commend
them for Those they may really have. There is an
inbred Vanity and Selfishness in Man, which prompts
him to entertain an Immoderate Opinion of himself;
and if another has so little Honesty, and so much Assu-
rance as to Praise him for his Endowments, Acquire-
ments, or his Performances, the Credulous Man has so
much Weakness as to Believe it.

But 4thly, Another Instance of Evil speaking is
either by Writing or Reading Books of Obscenity and
Indecence; or otherwise, by Diverting ourselves with
Wanton Ketches, and Amorous Songs. The Poyson
is convey'd to the Soul with a Fatal Success, when it
is Dress'd up in Harmony and Fine Singing. The
Diversions of this Kind are the same with those of the
Syrens, who are Reported by the Heathens to have
allur'd Men by the Sweetness of their Voice, to throw
themselves into the Sea, and then to have Devour'd
them.

The most Effectual Remedy against these and the like
Evils; is to Act with Prudence and Caution in the
Choice

Choice of our Company, and to hold no Correspondence with Wicked Men. 'Tis a Commendable Piece of Pride to keep these Men at a Distance; Because too Close a Familiarity with them Encourages them in such a Licentiousness of *Talk*, as is no less a Breach of Good Manners, than it is oftentimes an Abuse and Contempt of our Holy Religion. The First Principle of Education which Solomon prescrib'd to his Son, was to the same Purpose, *My Son, hear the Instruction of thy Father; &c. If Sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say Come with us, let us lay in wait for Blood, let us lurk privily for the Innocent, without Cause: Let us swallow them alive as the Grave, and whole as those that go down into the Pit: We shall find all precious Substance; we shall fill our Houses with Spoil: My Son, walk not thou in the Way with them; refrain thy Foot from their Path; Prov. i. 8, 10, 11, 12, 15.*

A Third Sense is, That of *Smelling*; but I shall pass over this Subject, because it is impossible that Sin can make any Entrance into the Soul This Way. The more Valuable Kind of Odours are the Property only of a Few; and as to Those which are more Common, such as the Smell of Violets, and Roses, &c. they are Innocent and Allowable.

I proceed Therefore in the 4th Place to Consider the Sense of *Tasting*, and such Rules and Directions, as may be of some Advantage to us in Keeping out the Incurfions of Sin from that Quarter. Now the Two Great Sins which generally gain Admission this Way, are Gluttony and Drunkenness; and These Vices, as we may observe by Experience, are frequently attended with many more Sins, besides a great Train of other Mischiefs and Inconveniencies. That Men might be

always upon their Guard, and Prepar'd to Meet our Lord at his Coming, St. Luke gives them this Necessary Caution; *Take Heed to yourselves, lest at any Time your Hearts be overcharg'd with Surfeiting, and Drunkenness,* Chap. xxi. 34. These Vices are Reckon'd in the Holy Scripture, among the Number of such as are entitl'd to Damnation. *Now the Works of the Flesh are Manifest, which are These; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Lasciviousneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch Like.* Of which I tell you again, that they who do ſuch Things, shall not Inherit the Kingdom of God, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Nor are these Sins only Rewarded with Future Punishments in another Life, but they many Times carry with them their own Punishment in This; For there is no Vice which ſo much Cloggs and Incumbers the Spirits, and Unqualifies Men for the Offices of Piety and Devotion, as Intemperate Living. St. Basil, in his Discourse of Fasting, by a very Proper Similitude, illustrates this Truth; *As thoſe Vapours,* ſays he, *which riſe from the Earth, overſpread the Heavens, and Intercept the Light of the Sun, ſo do Gluttony and Drunkenneſs excite in Men ſuch Fumes of Darkneſs as Obſcure the Brightneſs of Human Reaſon, and Overcaſt the Light of the Divine Spirit within us.*

Another ill Conſequence of Intemperance is; That 'tis Prejudicial to the Health, by filling the Body with Groſs Humours, and thereby Creating many Diſeaſes, which oftentimes are the Cauſe of Death. *Antiſphanes,* an Eminent Phyſician, mention'd by *Clemens Alexandrinus,* has aſſerted, That moſt of the Diſtempers Incident to a Human Body, are Occaſion'd by too great

a Quantity, and too great a Variety of Meats. St. Basil affirms on the other Hand, in his First Sermon upon *Fasting*, *That Nothing conduces more to the Health of Man, than Abstinence and Self-denial.* It is the Con- current Practice of all Physicians to prescribe a strict Forbearance from Wine and Meats in most Cases. I would subjoin to This; That all Intemperance in Eating and Drinking is Costly and Expensive, and reduces Men by Degrees to Poverty and Want. There is scarce any Vice which more impairs the Fortunes and Estates of Men than Luxury, and High Living. I shall conclude this Argument with this Observation, That Im- moderation and Excess in Feeding is in many Instances an Injury and Injustice to the Poor, in that it renders a Man incapable to Bestow his Superfluities upon them. The Demands for Eating and Drinking run so high, that nothing remains for the Exercise of his Beneficence and Charity. Thus that saying of the *Apostle* is literally fulfill'd, *One is Hungry, and another is Drunken,* 1 Cor. xi. .21. But not to enlarge any farther on the Great Mischiefs and Ill Consequences of an Intemperate Life, I shall Produce such a Remedy as may be of some Importance in the Prevention of this Evil. Now what I would Propose upon this Occasion, shall be the Imitation of the Great Examples of the Primitive Christians, and other Holy and Devout Persons in the Earliest Ages of the Church. It was look'd upon in those Times as a Piece of Luxury and Epicurism, to Eat any Thing that was Roast or Boil'd. I shall take no Notice of St. *Ambrose*, who according to the Account given of him by *Paulinus* in the History of his Life, fasted all the Days in the Year except the *Festivals*, and *Sundays*. I pass by the Practice of St. *Austin*, who, as *Possidius*,

Possidius, who wrote his Life, Testifies, liv'd Principally upon Herbs and Sallads, and rarely had a Dish of Meat upon his Table, unless it was for Strangers, or Sick Persons. I shall not mention many other Celebrated Instances of Abstinence and Mortification; I shall only observe, How God Himself, the Great Proprietour of Heaven and Earth, has Pointed out to us the Duty of Temperance, in the Method He Himself contriv'd to Feed the *Israelites*, for the Space of Forty Years, in their Passage thro' the Wilderness. The Almighty, the Infinitely Wise, the only Good God, who understood, who was able, who was willing to Relieve the Wants of his People, yet gave them only *Manna* and *Water* for their Subsistence. This was the Provision which Omniscience itself appointed for them, and yet they all continu'd in a State of Health and Vigour, till they broke in upon the Directions of Heaven, and required Meat for their Lust.

To this Example of God the Father, I shall annex the Example of his Blessed Son, *In whom were hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. The whole Entertainment for many Thousand People was only Five Barley Loaves, and Two Small Fishes, *John vi. 9*. Nor was this the Practice of our Saviour, only when he was in a State of Mortality and Want, but also after his Resurrection, *When all Power in Heaven and Earth was given unto him*. All the Provision he made for his Disciples was, a Small Quantity of Bread and Fish, *John xxi. 9*. There is no Mention made of Wines, or any Expensive Curiosities whatsoever. O how Infinitely Wide are the Counsels of God from the Counsels of Men! The Great Possessor of All things Recommends a Frugal Simplicity of Diet; The Spiritual Refreshments

freshments of Conscience, and the Pleasures of Divine Meditation are the only Feasts and Entertainments which he has any Regard to, and with which he indeed allows us to Sate our selves to the Full; while Vain Inconsiderate Man is always projecting New Scenes of Intemperance, and paying his Constant Adoration to his own Belly, according to the Observation of St. Paul, *Phil. 3. 9.*

The last Sense thro' which Sin Enters into the Soul of Man, is That of *Touching*, This is generally look'd upon to be the most Lively and Affecting of all the Senses. The Great and Crying Sins of Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleanness gain their Admission into the Heart of Man thro' this Sense. But the Rules of Modesty, and the Chastity of our Holy Religion forbid me to Enlarge upon this Subject.* These Vices God knows are too Common and Prevailing, and every Man's own Conscience, if he be not lost to the Convictions of it, will plainly tell him, when he is Guilty of them. I shall only add the Advice of St. Paul upon this Occasion; *But Fornication, and all Uncleanness, let it not be once named among you as becometh Saints. Eph. 5. 3.* Now as to these Diseases and Distempers of the Mind I should advise a Man rather to have Recourse to the Advice of a *Physician*, than the Assistance of a *Divine*. The First thing which the *Physician* generally prescribes, is the Forbearance of Meat and Wine. The Case of the Unchast Man is much the same; And the Prescription, if restrain'd to a Degree of Moderation, will be of Equal Service to him. *Use a little Wine*, says St. Paul to Timothy, for thy Stomachs sake, and thine often Infirmities, 1 Ep. 5. 23. *Use Wine*; that is, by reason of the Weakness of thy Stomach; But *Use a little*

little Wine, To avoid Intemperance; For Wine Inflames the Body, and enkindles the Fire of Lust. The next Step which the Physicians take is, to prevent a Fever by bleeding a Vein. There seems to be some Agreeableness to this Method of Cure in St. Paul's Management of himself; *I keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection,* 1 Cor. 9. 27. Another Care of the Physician is to Prescribe moderate Exercise; such as Walking, or the Employment of our selves in any other Active Innocent Sports and Recreations. What is Necessary in this Case to preserve the Health of the Body, is in some Sense Necessary also for the Health of the Soul. If a Man employ himself in the Spiritual Exercise of Prayer and Devotion, in a Holy Contemplation of the Mysteries of his Own Redemption, in a Consideration of the *Four last Things*, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, or any other Holy Subject in *Divinity*; These are a Prevailing Means to Abstract the Thoughts and Affections from the Things of Flesh and Sense. If these Religious Exercises prove Insufficient to reduce him to the Principles of Temperance and Sobriety, let him employ a farther Part of his Time in Reading the *Holy Scriptures*, or the *Lives* of the *Holy Apostles*, and Fathers of the Church, or any other Books of Piety and Devotion whatsoever.

To Finish this Chapter; The most Effectual Remedy against Luxury and Intemperance, and Consequently against the Carnal Desires of the Flesh, is to avoid Idleness; For as the Soul of Man is an Active Principle, and Constantly employ'd in Thought and Consideration, it is Reasonable to Believe, that if it be not engag'd in Necessary and Useful Speculations, it will busy itself in Vain and Impertinent, or in Sinful and

Wanton

wanton Thoughts. There are no Men so free from all Impurity and Uncleaness of Thought, as those who are taken up in worldly Business, or engag'd in the Study of human Learning. This was the Reason, it is highly credible, why our Blessed *Saviour* himself was pleas'd to choose his Parents out of the laborious Part of Mankind; because Industry and Application to Business is the best Prevention of Evil, and a Man is never more subject to the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, than when he has *nothing to do*. 'Tis credibly reported, that our Lord was some time assistant to his Father in his own Employment. I only observe this by the By, as a useful Instruction to Men in low Circumstances: In the first Place, that they should be pleas'd and satisfy'd with that State and Condition of Life, in which the Providence of God has plac'd them; and, Secondly, That they should keep off from all the Mischiefs and Inconveniences of an Idle and Unactive Life.

C H A P. XI.

The Eleventh Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, is:
To confirm a sincere and universal Repentance by Reformation and Amendment.

THE great Duty of Repentance consists in these following Particulars.

First, In Contrition, or a thorough Sense of the Nature and Guilt of Sin.

N . .

Secondly,

Secondly, In an humble Acknowledgment and Confession of it.

Thirdly, In a thorough Reformation of Life and Manners. And,

Lastly, In an equitable Restitution for any Acts of Injury and Injustice we may have done to others. Whosoever performs these Duties with Sincerity, with Constancy, without Flattery, and without Reserve, will receive Forgiveness of Sins.

The Duty of Contrition being the Foundation of the Duty of Repentance, I shall begin with that, and am oblig'd to premise, That wherever the Scripture mentions any thing concerning the Nature of this Duty, it does not express it self in such Terms, as imply a mere formal Sorrow and Concern for Sin, or some outward Expressions of Grief and Affliction for it, or any cold and heartless Resolutions against it for the future; but in such Terms, as import a deep Compunction of the Heart, and such a lively and afflicting Sense of the Horror and Guilt of it, as cuts and tears the very Soul and Conscience of Man: *Rent your Hearts, and not your Garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; chap. ii. 13.* It was a Custom among the Jews, to express their Grief, by tearing their Garments: In allusion to this Practice the Prophet directs us, to express our Concern for Sin, by *renting*, or *tearing* the Heart. And the Royal Psalmist, to describe the Duty of Repentance with more Force and Energy, assures us, that the Heart must be *broken, ground to pieces*, as it were, and quite *worn out*, before God will be reconciled to us: *The Sacrifice of God is a troubled Spirit, a broken and a contrite Heart,*

Heart, O God, shalt thou not despise: *Plai. li. 17.* There is so much *Life and Spirit* in these words, as implies a strong and hearty Concern for Sin. 'Tis a lame and imperfect Repentance which vents it self in these and the like indolent Expressions: "I am concern'd that I have acted in so imprudent a manner; I ought to have consider'd better; I will take care for the future, and hope God will forgive me for what is past." 'Tis almost incredible with what Strictness and Severity the ancient Fathers have deliver'd themselves on this Subject of Contrition: *St. Cyprian*, in his Discourse of *Fallen Man*, has these words: *Our Repentance ought to rise in proportion to our Crimes. If the Wound be deep, it must be probed and lanced, and attended with great Care. A long Course of Prayer and Abstinence must be gone thro', we must pass away our Days in Mourning, and our Nights in Watchings and Tears. What has a Sinner to do with Merriment and Pleasure? He ought to lay down in Sack-cloth, and Ashes, and his own Wickedness. Clemens Alexandrinus* gives this Character of Repentance, *That 'tis the Baptism of Tears.* *St. Gregory Nazianzen*, in his second Discourse of Baptism, has these words: *I never re-admit a Penitent into the Favour of the Church, unless I perceive him melted into Tears.* And *Theodoret*, in his Epitome of the Divine Decrees, in his Chapter of Repentance, thus expresses himself: *The Wounds which we receive after Baptism are indeed curable, but not so easily as by the Laver of Regeneration, but by a large Effusion of Tears, and a laborious Reformation.*

In this solemn and affecting manner have these Celebrated Lights of the Christian Church express'd them-

selves concerning the Nature of *Contrition*; however
 little regard may be had to this Duty in the present
 Age. To live righteously, and die peaceably, and to
 be reconcil'd effectually to God, a Man must retire into
 himself, and from the World, and thus expostulate
 the Case with himself: " Ah miserable Man that I am!
 " What Loads of Guilt sit heavy upon my Soul? I
 " dare not look up to Heaven, because I have offended
 " against it: I have no reasonable Expectance either of
 " Favour or Mercy from the Great Creator of all
 " Things, and the Fountain of all Good. I have dis-
 " oblig'd my most merciful and loving Father, who
 " has, in the most plentiful manner, bestowed his
 " Kindnesses upon me, and who, in all the Instances of
 " his Providence, has been liberal and beneficent to me
 " above measure. I dare not apply for Pardon to my
 " Saviour, to that Saviour who loved me, while I was
 " his Enemy, who died for me when I had sinned a-
 " gainst him; because I have again repeated my Pro-
 " vocations, and crucified my Lord afresh, and still
 " continue to do so. Oh the inhuman Returns for
 " such matchless condescending Love! Oh Ingratitude
 " excessive and inexpressible for such Over-flowings of
 " Bounty! My Saviour was whipped with Scourges,
 " was crowned with Thorns, was fastened with Nails
 " to the Cross; he was wounded to cure me, he was
 " bruised to heal the Maladies of my sinful Soul, and yet
 " I still go on to encrease his Sufferings. He expresses
 " to me, naked upon the Cross, what an ardent *Thirst*
 " he has for my Salvation; and I, in return, worse than
 " the Jews, give him *Gall and Vinegar to drink*. What
 " Thought

" Thought can reach, or what Tongue can express the
 " inconceivable Height of Glory I am fallen from?
 " Before I left the Paths of Virtue, and plunged my
 " self in the Depths of Sin, I was Heir Apparent of
 " the Kingdom of Heaven; I was but one Degree lower
 " than the Angels. But, alas! How am I fallen, like
 " *Lucifer* Son of the Morning, from the Throne of
 " God, and the Delights of Angels? *This* fleeting
 " short-lived Pleasure, *that* unreasonable Lust; *this* Scan-
 " dal and Reflection, *that* Act of Intemperance
 " and Injustice; *this* Prophanation of the Name of
 " God, or *that* Neglect or Contempt of his Wor-
 " ship, how has one, or more, or it may be
 " all these Vices contributed to the dreadful Fall?
 " From the glorious Liberty of being the Son of God,
 " I am sunk down into the Vassalage of the Devil, my
 " most implacable Enemy. This decaying Body of
 " mine is hastening daily to the Regions of Death, I
 " am approaching every moment the Confines of Eter-
 " nity. All *behind* me is Sin, and all *before* me is De-
 " struction. I now consider what I have *done*, and
 " should be glad I could effectually consider what I am
 " like to *suffer*. This Day, this Hour, perhaps this
 " Moment I shall depart this World. These Prospects
 " amaze and confound me, and my Ingratitude flies in my
 " Face. O let me rouse and alarm my self into a Sense
 " of my own Danger, the Heinousness of my Sins,
 " and the Necessity of Repentance. *I will arise there-*
 " *fore, with the prodigal Son, and go unto my Father,*
 " *and say unto him; Father, I have sinned against Hea-*
 " *ven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be*
 " *called*

“ called thy Son. I will search into, and deal impartially with my whole Soul ; I will shake off every favourite and beloved Sin, and endeavour to reconcile my self to my offended God.”

This religious Method of Enquiry and Self-Condensation has been the constant Practice of all devout Penitents, from the first Rise of the Christian Church, as being the most effectual means to bring the Sinner to a Consideration of himself. This was the Behaviour of the Royal Psalmist, when his Conscience charged him home with the two great Sins of Murder and Adultery, this awakened him into a deep Contrition for them, and immediately he expresses himself in this mournful Strain : *I am weary of my Groaning, every Night wash I my Bed, and water my Couch with my Tears ;* Psal. vi. 6. This was also the Behaviour of St. Peter, immediately upon the Denial of our Saviour. The Guilt of his Cowardice and Treachery soon overtook him, and we read, *That he went out, and wept bitterly ;* Mat. xxvi. 75. This, Lastly, was the Practice of the Woman who was a Sinner ; the Text tells us, *That she stood at Jesus Feet weeping, and began to wash his Feet with Tears, and to wipe them with the Hairs of her Head ;* Luke vii. 37, 38.

But, Secondly, Another particular Office or Branch of True Repentance, is humbly to acknowledge and confess our Sins to God. There is scarce any Duty, in the whole Compass of Christianity, which requires a greater share of religious Prudence, and an honest Impartiality in the Performance of it, than this of Confession. 'Tis with great Reluctance and Regret that Men

are

are first brought to enquire into the State and Condition of their own Souls ; and when the Force of Persuasion has led him thus far, they care not to dwell there too long, much less to be brought to an open and ingenuous Acknowledgment of their Crimes ; or at best they shall only express themselves in a general Confession of them : “ *Lord, I have broken all thy Commandments ; I have been guilty of all kinds of Sin ; I never, in my whole Life, did any one Action which was pleasing and acceptable to thee !* ” Now in such a general Confession as this, as it is greatly to be hoped that they acknowledge themselves to be *much worse* than they really are, by confessing what they were never guilty of ; so it is sadly to be feared, on the other hand, that they make themselves *much better*, by concealing, or not charging themselves with those Crimes which they have actually committed. There are others again who shall bring themselves to a particular Confession of their Sins, and who shall Distinctly, and in Order, as far as their Memory will give them leave, repeat and confess every single Sin they have been guilty of, but never enquire into the particular Circumstances and Aggravations of them ; not considering, that every Action is *more or less* sinful, according to the different Circumstances that attend it. In all moral Actions a great regard is to be had to the *Person, Place, Time,* and many other *Circumstances* of doing them : for what is lawful for *one Man*, by virtue of his Commission, or otherwise to do, may be unlawful in *another* ; What with Decency, and without Offence, may be done in *one Place*, cannot without Sin and Scandal be

be transacted in *another*: And, Lastly, there is also a particular *Time* and *Season*, which, in a great measure, distinguishes the Actions of Men, and makes them more or less immoral. There ought also, in Confession, some Respect to be had to the Nature of the Crime committed; as whether it be a *Private* or a *Publick* Vice; As also of the *different* *Laws* of which it is a Violation; and, in the last Place, some Consideration taken of the *Frequency* of doing it; because the same Crime, by being often repeated, is rather a *Complication* of Vices, than one single Sin.

This then is the Duty of every true Penitent, to retire into himself, and to examine his own Conscience as to the moral State and Condition of it; but in all Cases of Difficulty and Scruple to have recourse to the Judgment of some able and learned ~~person~~ who will give him Comfort and Satisfaction in all his Doubts.

A *third* Duty of *Repentance* is Reformation and Amendment of Life, or such a moral Change of all our evil Actions and Dispositions, as can only reconcile us to God. To express the utmost Concern for Sin, without any Amendment, or it may be the least Intention of so doing, is only a more solemn Piece of Hypocrisy, and a fatal Cheat we put upon our selves. It argues a mean Opinion, and unworthy of the Majesty of God, when we imagine that he can be pacified and prevailed upon by Tears, or a few whining Expostulations. Wherever the Scripture mentions any thing concerning *Repentance*, it is in such Phrases as import a thorough, perfect, and universal Change; and is therefore called a raising us from the Dead, a passing from Death unto Life,

Life, a Creating in us a new Soul, and a new Life, and being Born again. Now these, with many other Expressions of the like Nature, imply an entire Alteration in all the Dispositions of the Soul, and in the whole Tenour of Life. This is the great Argument of Conversion, when by an exemplary Piety, and a visible Holiness, we manifest to God whom we have displeased, and to the World, to whom we have given Offence, that we express the inward Penitency of the Soul: For as all Acts of Sin and Disobedience to God do naturally create, in the Minds of Men, some Trouble and Concern, yet this Trouble and Concern for Sin is only the Beginning of Repentance, and neither acceptable to God, nor available to Men, unless we make it the Ground and Foundation of a good Life.

But, Fourthly, Another Instance of the Duty of Repentance, is Restitution, or a Reparation of all Injury and Injustice, of what kind soever, which we have done to others. This, I say, is a proper Instance of Repentance, and indeed so Necessary a Part of it, that it will be defective, and imperfect without it. For as Repentance implies a Conviction of Mind that we have done amiss, so as to be truly Sorry for what we have done, and heartily wish that we had not done it, I cannot see how any Man's Repentance can be said to have work'd this Change of mind in him, when he is justly chargeable with acting injuriously by another. For altho' a Man's Judgment may be convinced, that a moral Change of Life is religious and necessary, yet no such Change can be conceived to be effectual, till a plenary Satisfaction be made to the injured Person, for all the unjust Actions

he has done him, and by undoing those Acts of Injustice, by an equitable Restitution. Nay, to come more close to the Subject: All our holy Purposes and Resolutions of Amendment, which are the Foundation of Repentance, will come to nothing, without a Reparation made for the wrongs we have done to others: For is it possible to Resolve in good earnest, and yet let fall this Resolution afterwards. A bare Resolution, unless it produces the good Effects it ought, in repairing the Injuries done, is no part of that Repentance which *worketh Salvation*.

As to the *Manner* and *Means* of Restitution, it would be endless to prescribe any fixed and determinate Rules. The *First* Enquiry, in Cases of Injury or Justice done, is, in what Respect we have Injured others, and to proportion, as far as we are Able, the Reparation to the Wrongs. If we have any way injured our Neighbour in his *Estate*, by any fraudulent Contracts, or other unfair ways of Dealing, we must make it a voluntary Act to do him Right, without any Compulsion from the Law. If we have injured him in his good *Name*, by Calumny and Evil-speaking, we are obliged to own the Offence, and ask Forgiveness, and to make our Recantation as publick as the Scandal.

And as these Rules are to be Observed in the *Manner* of our Restitution, so are there others also to be Observed as to the *Measures* of it. Now the Measures and Degrees of Restitution must rise and fall, in proportion to the Injuries done. If we cannot make Satisfaction in returning the very same Thing we were entrusted with, we must make amends by way of Equivalent.

Equivalent. Where no Restitution can be made of the Things, and no certain Valuation can be taken of it, in such Cases we must take care to make our Estimate accordingly; rather exceeding in the Measures of Restitution; because every Degree we fall short in our Compensations continues an Injury still.

I shall close this Chapter with this Observation; That Amendment and forsaking the Fault, on the Account of what our Saviour hath done and suffered for us, will procure Pardon for any Sin, by which we have offended none but God; but in all Acts of Injury and Injustice, we must not only amend our Faults to please God, and acknowledge them to appease Men; but we must also restore the Spoil, and return the Injuries we have done unto them.

C H A P. XII.

The Twelfth Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, is;
To be admitted by Baptism into the Christian Church.

I Have, in the preceeding Chapters, explained the Nature of the Christian Graces and Virtues conducive to a holy Life, and by consequence to a happy Death: I shall now go on to consider the Nature and Serviceableness of the Two Christian Sacraments, and the Holy Institution of Confirmation, appointed by our Saviour for that purpose. The two Sacraments are the Means or Instruments which God makes use of, by the Office of his Ministers, either for the Conveyance, or Increase

of Grace, to those who worship him in Faith and Holiness. The spiritual Privileges and Advantages of receiving these Holy Sacraments, are these. By our Initiation into the Church by *Baptism*, we become Members of that Church into whose Communion we are admitted, are translated to the Dignity and Honour of being the Sons of God, and by that means are entitled to an Inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Privileges and Advantages of receiving the *Holy Communion*, are, 1st, A general Pardon and Remission of Sin. And, 2^{dly}, A Conveyance of a larger share both of Gods preventing and assisting Grace.

The first Sacrament I shall enlarge upon, is that of *Baptism*; because this Sacrament does, in the order of Time, precede the other, inasmuch as no Man can be rightly qualified and prepared to receive the *Holy Communion* before he is baptized. The Nature and Essence of *Christian Baptism*, consists in these three Particulars: 1st, In a sincere Confession and Acknowledgment, either by our selves or others, of the whole Catholick Faith, and all the Particulars of it. 2^{dly}, In a Renunciation of all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. And, 3^{dly}, In a Readmission into a State of Grace and Favour of God, by being admitted into his Church; for every one, who is baptized, is freed thereby from the Servitude of the Devil, is adopted into the *Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*, and made Partaker of the Divine Grace.

These Particulars do, in some measure, specify to us the spiritual Privileges which every Man is entitled to by virtue of *Christian Baptism*. The first Particular of which

which is a sincere Confession, either by our selves, or others, of the whole Catholick Faith, and all the particular Branches of it: For it is impossible that any Person can be admitted into the *Christian Church*, without a publick Acknowledgment of the *Christian Faith*; and that not only in some particular Instances, but in a general Confession of it, of which *Baptism* is a *Seal*. And here I cannot but lament, with the deepest Concern, the shameful Ignorance of the meaner sort of People amongst us, who are so far from confessing the Articles of the *Christian Faith*, that they cannot pronounce their *Creed*, or at least are wholly insensible of the meaning of it; and yet to believe all the Articles of the *Christian Faith*, is what they solemnly promis'd by their *Vouchers* in *Baptism* to do. Now if *Christ*, as *St. Paul* assures us, *dwells in our Hearts by Faith*, *Eph. iii. 17.* that is, if a Man cannot be accounted a *Christian*, without believing the *Doctrines* of *Christianity*, how can he dwell in the *Hearts* of those, who have only a general and confused Notion of the Articles of the *Christian Faith*, without any cordial Sense or Belief of them? And if *God purifies our Hearts by Faith*, as *St. Peter* informs us, *Acts xv. 9.* how wholly unfit for so Divine a Residence is that Heart, or that Soul, which believes not *Jesus Christ*, and his *Doctrine*, altho' he has receiv'd the outward and visible Sign, or Form of *Baptism*. I am now speaking only of *Adult Persons*; for, as to the Case of *Infants*, my Opinion is, that they are justified by the Free Grace of *God*, without any good Works of their own; however, if they come to Riper Years, they are

are obliged to take the Promises, made by their Sureties, upon themselves, and to believe and confess publicly, in the Church, all the Articles of the Christian Faith; for, as St. Paul writes, *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation*: Rom. x. 10.

But, 2dly, A solemn Renunciation of all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, is another Particular of Christian Baptism. And indeed whether we consider the Nature and Purity of a Christian Church, and what a strict Discipline and Severity of Life it requires of its Members, it is necessary that some previous Assurances should be given either by our selves, or others, to that purpose. The Reason why the Church was pleased to appoint *Vouchers* was, that in case of any Neglect, or the Death of the Parents, a farther Provision might be made for the Care and Education of Children, by those who at the time of Baptism, were tied to them by a spiritual Relation. The Charge given by the Minister in Baptism, to the *Vouchers* or *Sureties*, is very solemn and important; and the Promises made on their Parts, seem to me to carry in them the Force and Obligation of a Religious, or Sacramental Oath. To renounce the Devil and all his Works, the vain Pomp and Glory of the World, with all covetous Desires of the same, and the carnal Desires of the Flesh, is an Engagement ratified and confirmed in the more immediate Presence of God, and in the Face of the whole Congregation; the Breach of which, as the one are Witnesses of, so the other will surely judge, and condemn, and punish.

A third Particular of *Christian Baptism*, or rather the great Priviledge or Advantage of it, is, a Readmission into a State of Grace and Favour with God, from a State of Sin, of Slavery, and of Death, by being initiated into Christ's Church. O the inexhaustible Riches of the Bounty and Goodness of God ! O invaluable, O wonderful, O infinitely extensive Priviledge ! Such inconceivable Munificence does equally surpass our Thoughts, as it exceeds our Admiration. Good God ! who is able to comprehend, who will not be filled with Surprise and Astonishment, nay, who will not dissolve into holy Tears, into Tears of Extasy and Joy, when he contemplates such an amazing Instance of Divine Love ? *I was, before I was baptiz'd, in a State of Captivity, a Child of the Devil, subject to the Power of Hell and Death; but see the wondrous Change effected by Baptism ! I am now redeemed from Servitude and Sin ; I am admitted into the sacred Fellowship of Christ's Church ; I am become a Child of God, and am entitl'd to an Inheritance of his glorious Kingdom. How can I reflect on such inestimable Advantages, and dare to be ungrateful ?* These devout Reflections, especially in young Men, will prevent the Prevalency of those Vices their tender Age is most expos'd to, and will lay all Temptations, of what kind soever, dead at their Feet. For what is the principal Cause of all that Rashness and Folly to which young Men are generally addicted, but Carelessness and Inconsideration ? Why is it that they give a Loose to their Appetites in the Prosecution of their Pleasures, and indulge themselves to the full in the Pride, and Ease, and Luxury of Life, but

but that they did not consider the Dignity, and Honour, and Advantages, they were entitled to by *Christian Baptism*? This, I would observe, is the Reason why so many young Men, without any Fear or Danger, or any Sense of Guilt, run so hastily down the Precipice of Vice, because they are fallen from that Grace which was conferred on them by *Baptism*, and think it not good, in the Language of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, to bear the Yoke in their Youth; Lam. iii. 27. To encrease and improve that share of Divine Grace, which was bestowed on us by *Baptism* by a sincere Repentance to renounce the Devil and all his Works, to return to the Service of our Lord and Master, and to continue in his Worship to our Lives end, is the only means to live righteously, to die peaceably, and to reign triumphantly in Happiness and Glory.

Now in order to behave our selves, in this Respect, with Piety and Prudence, it will be highly necessary that every Man consider the Duties and Obligations which the *Sacrament of Baptism* lays upon him. The *mystical washing away of Sin*, expressed in *Baptism*, denotes to him a great Purity and Innocence of Life and Conversation. The continual Attempts made by the Devil upon the most immaculate Virtue, are so many Obligations for Continuance and Resolution to keep our selves free from the Pollutions of Sin. A modest and chaste Behaviour, and a Freedom from all the Indecencies of a loose and incontinent Life, are the distinguishing Characters of a Member of *Christ's Church*, and the brightest Ornaments of his Profession. The Spots and Blemishes we contract by breach of our
Baptismal

Baptismal Covenant, are only wiped out by true Contrition, and the Tears of Repentance.

The next Duty which the Sacrament of Baptism lays upon every Man, is more general, and extends its self to his whole Conduct, in obliging him to an universal Righteousness in all his *Thoughts, Words, and Actions*. The whole Duty of a Person regenerate by Baptism, is fully comprised in that congratulatory Sentence of St. Paul to himself; *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith*; 2 Tim. iv. 7. These words express to us, in the first Place, the great Bravery and Courage which a Soldier, listed under Christ's Banner, ought to exert in fighting against the *World, the Flesh, and the Devil*. They denote to us, in the next Place, the *Course or Race*, which every one, who is admitted into Christ's Church, ought to run, and his *Continuance* in so doing, till he arrives at his Journey's end. They import, in the Last Place, such a lively and active Faith, as discovers it self in improving and increasing the Talents which God has entrusted us with, in exercising our selves in our several Employments with Diligence and Honesty, in taking care of our own Souls, and the Souls of those who are committed to our Charge; and, in short, in the Performance of all those Graces and Virtues, which are the Ornament and Beauty of the Christian Life. The infinitely wise God has so contrived the Happiness of Men, that tho' he is willing to adopt them by Baptism into a Sonship to himself; yet in such a manner has he effected this, as is highly conducive to his own Glory. There is something therefore required on our part, to

entitle us to the Privileges of this Sonship, in being made Heirs of eternal Glory; and that is a constant and habitual Exercise of our selves in such good Works, as are wrought in us by the Spirit of God, concurring with the Freedom of our own Will: For such ample Possessions, such Crowns, and Scepters, and Kingdoms, are not to be obtained by a Life of Ease, of Merriment, and Pleasure; but by Industry and Labour, by Care and Vigilance, and a continued Perseverance in Holiness even unto the Time of Death.

If a Man therefore, in consequence of the Premises, by calling himself to a severe Account, and looking into all the different Stages of his Life, shall find himself to have acted with that universal Integrity, and Steadiness of Principle; if he has bravely stood it out against the Allurements of Honour, the Prospect of Interest, the Charms of Pleasure, and the Invitations of Sense; if upon such a Review of himself, he feels within him the Applauses and Congratulations of his own Conscience, as having behaved himself, in all the Duties of Christianity, consistently with his Holy Profession, let him triumph with St. Paul, and say, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day*; 2 Tim. iv. 8. If, on the other hand, thro' Weakness or Cowardice, or thro' Treachery and Baseness, in his Conflicts with his spiritual Enemies, he has dishonourably given Ground, or tamely surrendered without Resistance and Opposition; if thro' Inadvertency, Surprise, or Weariness, he has stood still, or tired, or laid down in his Christian Course; if thro' Vanity,

Vanity, Partiality, or any human Views, he has broke thro' the Engagements of his *Baptismal Vow*, let him endeavour to make God his Friend, and his Conscience his Friend, by an universal *Repentance*.

C H A P. XIII.

The Thirteenth Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, is ;
To take upon our selves the Baptismal Vow, made in our Names, by Confirmation.

THAT Men may rightly understand the Nature of this Holy Institution, I shall go up to its first Original in the time of the *Apostles*. In the Primitive Church three *extraordinary Gifts* of Wisdom, Eloquence, and Charity, in the highest Degree, were the Effect of this *Institution*; besides a Power of working Miracles for the Conversion of the Heathen World. These *extraordinary Gifts* were signified by the Figure of the *Fiery Tongues*, and the *Noise of a rushing mighty Wind*, which were seen and heard on the Day of *Pentecost*; inasmuch as the *Light* of Fire represents Wisdom, the *Heat* of that Fire the Warmth of Charity, the *Figure of Tongues* the Gift of Eloquence, and the *mighty Sound* a Power of acting above the ordinary Course of Nature. The two latter of these Gifts, as they were only necessary in the Infant-State of the *Christian Church*, are not now communicated to us, but the Gifts of Heavenly Wisdom and Divine Love do still continue, and are daily bestowed upon the Members of *Christ's Church*, by the Laying on of the Hands of the *Bishops*,

who are the Successors of the *Apostles*, by fervent Prayer, and their authoritative Benediction.

The Design and Intention of the Church in *Confirmation*, is; That Persons, who have been baptized, being made sensible of the Nature and Obligations of their *Baptismal Covenant*, should renew their Engagements to it in their own Persons, in the Presence of God, and in the Face of his Church; and the spiritual Advantages which accrue to our selves by so doing are considerably great: For, in the *first* Place, the Holy Office of *Confirmation*, is a fresh Obligation to a Christian Life, or a repeated Assurance made to God, of acting, in all respects, suitably to our Christian Profession. In the *second* Place, it is an effectual means of conveying a larger measure of God's Grace, and Holy Spirit; as it is, in the *third* Place, a Sign or Token of Christian *Communion*, by laying Men under an indispensable Necessity of communicating with such Persons as *Christ* himself has appointed to preside over his Church.

But that I may consider the Obligations we lay upon our selves, by virtue of *Confirmation*, with more Advantage, it will be necessary to consider, in the *1st* Place, What Kind of Enemies we are like to meet with in our Christian Warfare, and in what Manner they make their Attempts upon us. And, *2dly*, What Effects the Office of *Confirmation* has in the Resistance of them. As to the first of these Particulars: The Enemies which we renew our Vows in *Confirmation* to encounter with, are the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*. The Power and Prevalency of these spiritual Enemies of Mankind is too sadly evidenced, in that they are able to overbear

and beat down the most vigorous and hearty Resolutions of the best Men. The most Christian and Heroick Examples of Piety and Holiness have been forced, in many Instances, to acknowledge their superiour Strength, and have been many times overcome in those Virtues, wherein they conceived themselves to have been most secure. The Manner they attack us in, is in a great measure invisible and unknown to us: For we wrestle not only against Flesh and Blood; but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in High Places: Eph. vi. 12. If they find us impregnable in one Virtue, they will attempt us in another; if we stand firm in our Piety towards God, they will try us in our Duty towards our Neighbour; and if they succeed not there, they shall make their Efforts by some Allurements to Intemperance and Infobriety in our selves. If the World, with all its Pomp and Splendour, cannot prevail upon us, the Flesh shall join in the Assault; and if we bravely maintain our Ground against the Force of both, Hell it self will come into the Confederacy, and the whole united Power of the Worlds the Flesh, and the Devil, shall at once besiege us.

I come now to consider what Effects this Holy Institution has in the Resistance of these Enemies: For as the Power of these spiritual Enemies is so great, it will require at least a more than equal Degree of Strength to conquer and subdue them. Now as Man is not capable of supplying himself with such a measure of Divine Grace, as is sufficient for this purpose; therefore God has been pleased to appoint several Instituted means
both

both for the Improvement and Increase of Grace; and, among others, this of *Confirmation*. But before any Man can be entitled to the Benefits and Advantages of it, there are some Conditions, both *before* and *after*, to be performed on *his* Part, without which he can neither be duly qualified to receive it, or to reap any Advantage from it. Now the Duty of every Person *before* Confirmation, is to consider fully the Nature of those Vows and Promises which were made for him in his *Baptism*, before he take them upon himself: For as every Man, by virtue of *Confirmation*, renews that *Covenant* which he made with God in his *Baptism*, before he can be entitled to those Priviledges which that *Covenant* promises to him, he must consider what is to be done on his Part, and the Obligations he lays under to do it.

Now the Nature of the *Baptismal Vow* or *Covenant* does principally consist: 1st, In an entire Renunciation of all the Temptations of our spiritual Enemies, so as to be always upon our Guard, and watchful against them, in whatsoever Disguise and Appearance they may address themselves to us. 'Tis to consider our own Weakness and Inability, without God's special Grace, in resisting these Temptations, and the great Force and Prevalency of them; so as neither to be flattered, nor frightened, nor persuaded to act upon any unlawful Principle of *Pride*, of *Inclination*, of *Pleasure*, or *Advantage* whatsoever.

But, 2^{dly}, The Nature of the *Baptismal Vow* consists also in a firm and well-grounded Belief of all the Articles of the Christian Faith, without disputing their Authority,

The Art of Dying well. III

thority, or enquiring too nicely into the mysterious Sense and Meaning of them ; looking upon them not as the Objects of our *Reason*, but of our *Faith* ; believing them, because God has revealed them, and accounting the Belief of them as the surest and best Foundation for a holy and a virtuous Life.

But, 3dly, The Nature of the Baptismal *Vow* or *Covenant*, does consist in an universal Obedience to all the Commands of God, and a constant Perseverance in them. For the Christian Profession obliges us not only to obey the Laws of God, but obliges us also to obey *all* of them, and not only so, but to continue to do so at *all Times*. The Christian Law is a Law of Perfection, which Perfection would be wanting in that Law, if it did not prescribe *Universality* and *Constancy*, which are not only the Ornament, but the Excellence and Accomplishment also of all Christian Obedience.

The spiritual Advantages of this Holy Institution, are *Wisdom* and *Courage* ; *Wisdom* to understand the Perfection of the Christian Law, and *Courage* and supernatural Strength to perform it, in opposition to all the Power of our spiritual Enemies. And that a Man may inform himself with more Certainty, after Confirmation, whether he has secured these Advantages to himself, let him exercise himself in these, and the like Enquiries: *Do I find my Understanding enlighten'd by the Spirit of God, in the Discovery and Knowledge of Divine Truth ? Can I distinguish the Preference of Things Temporal to Things Eternal ? Are my spiritual Capacities enlarged, and do I perceive in my self any Increase and Improvement in that Wisdom which comes from above ? Am*

I empower'd by any farther Communications of Supernatural Strength, manfully to fight under Christ's Banner? Or have I Courage to bear with Patience the Injuries and In-dignities of others? Is my Heart inflamed with the Love of God, or warmed with a generous Compassion for the Sufferings and Misfortunes of others? Am I dead and lost to the Allurements of Sense? Can I calm the Resentments of Anger, and pass by a Provocation with as much Satisfaction as another would excuse it upon me? Am I willing to be reconciled to my offending Brother? If so, I have renewed my Baptismal Covenant with Success, and I triumph in the blessed Consequence of so doing.

The Conclusion of the whole is this; That, this solemn Renewal of our Baptismal Covenant, by Confirmation, is not only a repeated Promise, and in consequence a farther Obligation to a Christian Life; but that 'tis also a Pledge of farther Advantages, in that it gives a Man a Title to receive the Holy Communion.

C H A P. XIV.

The Last Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, is, To receive frequently the Holy Communion.

THE Sacrament of the Eucharist is an Appointment of that Dignity and Excellence, that not only Divine Grace it self, but also the very Author of Divine Grace is, in a spiritual manner, contained in it. That this Holy Sacrament may prove serviceable and instrumental to the Purposes of Holy Living and Dying, it is necessary, in the first Place, That every Christian look

look upon himself as under an indispensable Obligation to receive it; according to our Saviour's Rule, *Unless ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*, Chap. vi. 53. And, Secondly, That he rightly qualify and prepare himself for a worthy Reception of it; that he may avoid that Denunciation pronounced by St. Paul: *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body*; 1Cor.xi. 29. It has been made a Question by some, *How often it may be necessary for any Man to Receive this Holy Sacrament*; And again; *What Preparation is sufficient for a worthy Reception of it*.

As to the first of these Questions, the Answer is; That there have been Different Usages and Customs in the Different Ages of the Christian Church as to the Frequency of this Duty. In the Primitive Times, they were very constant in receiving it: 'Tis for this Reason that St. Cyprian, in his Discourse on the Lords-Prayer, explains that Petition, *Give us this day our daily Bread*, of the Holy Communion; and believes, that unless we are prevented by some lawful Impediment, we ought to communicate Daily. In After-Ages, upon the Decay of Christian Piety, People were shamefully negligent of this Solemn Commemoration. Now tho' there is no Stated Time mentioned in Scripture, with regard to the Frequency of receiving; yet I cannot but concur with the Opinion of the most Learned Divines, viz. That it would be a very pious and commendable Practice in the Clergy to receive every Sunday, as also on the more noted Festivals of the Church. There's a remarkable Passage, quoted by some Writers as the words of St.

Austin, to this purpose; *I neither commend, nor do I blame those, who receive the Communion daily, yet would I persuade and advise all Christians to communicate every Sunday.* Now altho' that Book of *Ecclesiastical Opinions*, from whence this Sentence is taken, does not seem to be genuine, yet is it of an antient Date, and no way repugnant to his Sentiments, who, in his *Epistle to Januarius*, manifestly gives his Opinion, That those Men are not mistaken, who judge it proper to communicate *Daily*; nor those, on the other hand, who look upon themselves under no Necessity of receiving so often. Now if this be the Opinion of *St. Austin* in this Point, all I would observe from thence is, That we would by no means find fault with those, who are of a middle Opinion between both, and think it reasonable to Communicate at least every Sunday. *St. Jerom* was entirely of the same mind, as may be gather'd from his *Commentary* on the *Epistle to the Galatians*; where, in his Exposition of the fourth Chapter, he has these Words: *As it is lawful for us to pray, and to fast often, and to receive the Communion every Sunday, &c.* This was also the Opinion of several other learned and devout Men.

I pass on now to the next Head; by enquiring what Preparation is necessary for a worthy Reception of this Holy Sacrament, that Men may receive it to their Spiritual Advantage, and not to Judgment and Condemnation. Now the principal Qualification required in a worthy Communicant, is; That the Soul be actuated and enliven'd by a Life of Grace, and not, in the Language of *St. Paul*, that it be *Dead in Trespasses and Sins*. It is for this reason that the holy Communion is exhibited

bited to us under the Outward and Visible Signs of *Bread and Wine*; because these Elements are the proper Nourishment and Refreshment, not of the Dead, but the Living: *He that eateth of this Bread, says our Saviour, shall live for ever*; John vi. 51.

But, Secondly, Since this holy Commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, is not only the Spiritual Food and Nourishment of the Soul, but is also a Remedy against all the Distempers incident to it; it is farther Necessary, in the Second Place, That whosoever desires a good State of Spiritual Health, and to be healed of all the Diseases of the Soul, and especially such Diseases as are most Mortal to it; such as Luxury, Covetousness, Pride, and the like, should endeavour to Cure them by Repentance. That the Blessed Sacrament is a Medicine for all the Diseases of the Soul, St. Ambrose is very Express in his first Book of the *Sacraments*; *He who has receiv'd a Wound, stands in need of a Cure; it is Sin that wounds the Soul, the Venerable and Heavenly Feast of Christ's Body and Blood is an effectual Prescription for it.* And St. Bernard, in his Discourse of the Lord's Supper, advises his Brethren, that whenever they shall observe their vicious Inclinations, and other Indispositions of the Soul to be healed, they would attribute to it Principally to the Virtue and Efficacy of the holy Sacrament.

But, Lastly; Since the Holy Communion is not only the spiritual Food and Nourishment of the Soul, and an effectual Cure for all the Diseases which are incident to it; but also because the Great Physician of Souls is there spiritually present; it is therefore necessary, in the 3d

Place, that we not only purify the Soul for so Divine a Residence, but also that he fill and adorn it with all the Graces of the Christian Life, and especially the Duties of Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Piety, and Devotion. These Ornaments, these Heavenly Accomplishments of Soul, are the best Furniture, and the most delightful Entertainment for so Divine a Guest. I shall only add, That this Heavenly Physician, who thus condescends to visit us in the Elements of Bread and Wine, is no less than God himself, the great Creator of all things; who, as he includes in his own Nature the highest Degrees of Purity and Perfection, so does he delight to dwell only in a spotless and immaculate Soul. *With what Purity, says St. Chrysostom, ought every Man to commemorate so pure a Sacrifice? How clean, how innocent ought that Heart to be which takes his Saviour in it? How free from all Obscenity and Indecence ought to be that Mouth, which is thus purified by this Spiritual Fire of Divine Love.*

This Duty then of receiving the Holy Communion, requiring such an entire Purity of Life and Manners, and so unblemished a Conversation, with what Retirement, with what Severity of Examination ought every Man, who intends to communicate, to enter into his own Soul, before the All-seeing God, who searches the very Heart and Reins, and consider thorowly with himself, what pressing Obligations lay upon him to frequent the Holy Communion, and what a religious and solemn Preparation is required of him for so holy an Institution. If by frequenting these holy Mysteries, he perceives the Grace of God to be shed abroad in his Heart

if

if he observes his evil Dispositions to go off, and his Soul to be daily strengthened and confirmed in the Habits of Grace and Holiness, and that he is arriving, as much as possible, to the *Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ*, this will excite in him a spiritual Complacency, a holy Triumph, and he will proceed, not with a slavish and a degenerate Fear, but with an awful and humble Reverence in the Service of God. If he be of the Number of those, who by *Shifts* and *dilatory Excuses*, and *inconclusive Reasons*, shall argue himself into a total Neglect of this *Holy Sacrament*, or the No-Necessity of communicating *often*, or at the most but at the *three great Festivals* of the Year, let him conclude himself to be in a dangerous State: For the Design of the Church, in obliging all her Members to communicate at least three times in the Year, was not intended as an Order, or an Injunction to communicate no oftner, but that they should receive so many times at least, unless they would subject themselves to her Censure and Authority. As to those Persons who receive the *Holy Sacrament*, but only at those stated Times prescribed by the Church, it is sadly to be feared that they approach the Table of the Lord merely out of *Custom*, or *Fear* of the Power of the Church, and by communicating only upon such servile Principles as these, 'tis no wonder if they pay no Reverence to the *Sacraments*; and that, after receiving, it makes no lasting Impression upon their Minds. If, in the last Place, there be any Person, whether of the *Laity* or *Clergy*, who receives the *Holy Communion* constantly, at least *every Week*, and yet discovers in himself no Improvements

provements in Holy Living. If he still retains the same immoderate Love of the World, the same Desires of Riches, Pleasures, and Preferments; nay, if he finds himself not less mortified to the Things of Flesh and Sense, and more actuated and entivened with an ardent Thirst of Immortality, let him assure himself that he is not in a State of Grace and Favour with God, but that he has received the *Body and Blood of Christ* to his own Condemnation, and that, in this Case, there is a Necessity for a speedy and a sincere Repentance.

I shall conclude this Chapter, in recommending to you the devout Behaviour of a Man eminent for Holiness, mentioned by *Bonaventure*, as an Incentive to our Coldness and Insensibility at the time of receiving:

“ This Good Man, says he, burned with an ardent
 “ Thirst after this Heavenly Feast, struck with Admi-
 “ ration of such tender, such adorable, such conde-
 “ scending Love: He was often at the Table, and be-
 “ haved himself there with that Awe and Reverence,
 “ as had an irresistible Influence upon those who beheld
 “ him, when, being filled with the Divine Grace, and
 “ under a spiritual Extacy, he tasted the delicious Feast
 “ of the Immaculate Lamb.

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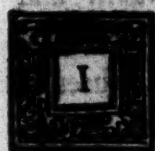


THE Art of Dying well.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

The First Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is; To consider the Nearness, and the Consequences of it.



IN the Beginning of the *First Book*, I divided this Treatise into *Two Parts*: In the *First* I proposed to consider such Rules for Dying well, as might be of some Service to us in a *State of Health*, when Death seemed to be at some Distance from us. In the *Second*, which is now upon my Hands, I shall enlarge upon such Rules only as may be of some Service, when Death shall make a *nearer Approach to us*; that is, when either by Reason of Old Age we are under a visible Decay, or by Reason of a-
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ny Indisposition or Casualty, we have not, in all Probability, any considerable Time to live in the World. Now the *first* Rule of this kind seems to me to be the *Contemplation* of Death; by which I do not barely understand some transient and useless Reflections upon the mortal State and Condition of Man, and the Uncertainty of human Life, but such a practical Consideration of it, and the final Consequences of it, upon the Minds of Men, as shall awaken them into a Sense of themselves, and put them upon a due Preparation for their last Hour. For altho' it be the Duty of every Christian, in the *Time of Health*, to employ himself in a constant Thought of Dying; because *in the midst of Life we are in Death*: yet such a Consideration, generally speaking, does not come so close to the Consciences of Men, nor make so lasting an Impression upon them, as a nearer Prospect, or rather a kind of *feeling* it to steal daily upon them; and the Reason of this is, because Men are more sensibly affected by a Consideration of such Objects as are nearer to them, than of such as are more Remote, and at some Distance. The Contemplation of Death to a Man in the Bloom and Spring of Youth, or in a Confirmed State of Health, is too melancholy a Thought; it abates the Pleasures of Life, and takes off the Relish of all human Enjoyments, so that he can find no time for such gloomy Considerations. But when Death, in all its Poms of Terrors, appears visibly before him, when his Spirits begin to sink, and the whole Body is under a sensible Decay, this awakening Call from Heaven excites in him a profitable Consideration of his own Death.

Death. There is nothing contributes more to our Improvement in all Arts, than the Exercise and Application of them; and tho' Instruction and the Force of Eloquence may have some Effect upon the Minds of Men, in the *Art of Dying well*; yet there is nothing which touches them so deeply as the Pains and Diseases which usually attend it. Now, *as it is appointed unto all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment*, to improve the Consideration of Death to the best Advantage, it will be necessary,

In the 1st Place, To consider Death under that natural Notion which all Men have of it, *viz.* as it implies a *Disunion or Separation of Soul and Body*; yet so that the Soul, which is an Immortal Principle, shall, in the Day of Judgment, be reunited to the same individual Body it enlivened here. If Men by Death were reduced to a State of *Insensibility*, or *Annihilation*, the Inference drawn by the *Epicure* and the *Atheist* would be very justifiable: *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*; 1 Cor. xv. 32. That there are such practical *Atheists*, as never employ a serious Hour in the Contemplation of Death; no, not when the Pains of Death take hold of them, is an Observation too common to be denied. Now tho' it is impossible that any Man, who has his Senses about him, can be so weak as to dispute the Certainty of Death; yet Experience convinces us, that many Men go out of the World in so Thoughtless a manner, as if they believ'd an utter *Extinction* of the whole Man, and that no Account was to be given of their Actions in a future State. Whereas the Separation of Soul and Body is only for a time, and not a Divorce for ever. An obstinate Infidelity, and a

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strong Resolution of believing only what pleases us, cannot alter the unchangeable Articles of the *Christian Faith*, viz. the *Resurrection of the Body*, and the *Life everlasting*.

It is therefore the highest Instance of Divine Wisdom to look to the last Issue and Consequence of Things, to consider the Nature of an *immortal Spirit*, and the *Unchangeableness* of that State which Death shall send us to. There are certain previous Qualifications and Dispositions of the Soul required in every Man for a perfect Enjoyment of Heavenly Glory: To pass from a State of Vice to a State of Virtue, is not morally impossible in this Life, *The Time cometh when no Man can work*. The whole Happiness of Man depends upon a wise Management of those Talents which God has entrusted him with in this time of Probation; and whosoever dies in a State of Enmity with God, is entitled to eternal Condemnation; but whosoever dies the Friend of God, and Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, can never fall from that Eminency of Grace and Glory.

But, 2^{dly}, It is not only a Christian Duty to consider Death in its own *Nature*, as it implies a *Separation of Soul and Body*, but to consider it also in the *Circumstances and Consequences* of it; and therefore it is necessary, in the *Second Place*, to consider the *Uncertainty of Death*, I mean as to the *Time* of it: For this Consideration of Death, as to the *Time* of it, is one of the principal Arguments for a religious Watchfulness, and a constant Preparation for it. This is the same Reason which our Blessed Saviour himself makes use of to the same purpose, in the Parable of the *Ten Virgins*: *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day, nor the Hour when the Son of*

of Man cometh, Mat. xxv. 13. The Divine Willom, unsearchable to all, is sometimes pleased to send a deliberate Summons, and to give Men Time and Opportunity of preparing for their latter end, by a lingering Sickness; but, generally speaking, this is not the Case of many: And yet the same infinite Willom, for Reasons best known to himself, prevents others, by a sudden Death, from making so suitable a Preparation. Whether this be done, as it seems highly probable, to warn the Living; or whether the Sinner has outliv'd the Overtures of Divine Grace; or whether, as is sometimes the Case of good Men, they are already prepared for our Lord's Coming, it is not very material to enquire: For if it be certain that Men must die, and if it be no less uncertain when they must die; that is, whether sooner or later, the most religious Use we can make of these Reflections, is to have our Lights burning, and our Lamps trimmed, without the least Hesitation or Delay. This is highly reasonable upon a double Account: For, in the first Place, if we neglect the present Opportunity, it is very uncertain whether God will be so kind to us, as to allow us Time to prepare our selves hereafter, or not. And, Secondly, If we are unwilling at present to qualify our selves for a happy Death, it may with good Reason be questioned, whether we shall not only be more unwilling, but also more unable to do it at another time. But, Thirdly, To improve the Contemplation of Death more effectually, it will be necessary to consider the Consequences of it. This will have a strong Influence upon Men, in a strict Enquiry into, and thorough Examination of their own Consciences: For he that considers rightly that he shall certainly die, and

that after Death he must give an Account to God of all his *Thoughts, Words, and Actions*, will, in consequence of such a Belief, use his best Endeavours to die well, that he may be able to give a good Account of them. Now it is impossible for any Man to give any good Account of his Behaviour in these respects, who does not either endeavour to keep his Conscience clear of the Guilt, or purify it from the Pollutions of Sin. The most effectual means to keep a *good* Conscience, or to purify a *bad* one, is frequently to enquire into it; as whether a Man perceives himself to increase daily in all the Principles of Virtue and Holiness? or whether he loses Ground by the Force and Prevalency of his spiritual Enemies? Whether his Aversion to Sin grows stronger than it was formerly, and his Dispositions to Holiness are more habituated and confirmed? If, upon these Enquiries, a Man finds himself to have acted in no Instances against the Judgment of his own Conscience, a continual Spring of Triumph and sincere Delight will refresh his Soul; if, on the other hand, he wounds or pollutes his Conscience with the Guilt of any Sin, especially of any willful, presumptuous and deliberate Sin, his own Mind will rise in Judgment again him, and gall him with the sad Remembrance of it: *In all thy Works,* says the *Wiseman*, *consider thy latter End, and thou shalt never do amiss*; that is, if a Man considers that Death determines his everlasting State as to Happiness or Misery, he will act with Wariness and Prudence, and consider beforehand what will be the Consequences of so doing, as that he must give an Account of it to God, both in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment:

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But on This Subject I shall enlarge more fully in the following Chapter.

C H A P. II.

The Second Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is: To consider that God will call Men to an Account, for all their Actions, in the Day of Judgment.

THERE is a twofold Judgment, according to the Opinion of Learned Men, which every Man must undergo: The *First* is called, *the Particular Judgment*, by which the Soul of every individual Man is called to an Account, immediately upon its Separation from the Body by Death; The *Second* is called, *the General Judgment*, by which the whole Body of Mankind shall be called to an Account at the final Consummation of all Things. Who can forbear, in the Contemplation of a *Future Judgment*, to break forth and say? O Joyful Dreadful Day! to the Righteous a Day of Triumph and Exultation; to the Wicked a Day of Darkness, of Confusion, and Trembling of Heart. The Consideration both of a *Particular* and *General* Judgment is highly serviceable to the Purposes of Holy Dying.

The Opinion of some learned *Divines*, and which indeed seems to me very credible, upon this Subject, is; That *Christ*, who is the Supreme Judge of every Man at the Time of his Death, does signify the Sentence he passes upon him either by the *Ministry* of Angels, or some *Invisible Revelations* to the Soul, immediately upon its Separation; and that the Souls of good Men are attended

tended by Angels into the Mansions of the Blessed; and the Souls of the Wicked, by a Power given them from God, are carryed down to Hell. This Judgment passes upon every Man, in the very Instant of his *Dissolution*; the Judge, who knows all things, and resides in all Places, being then present; the Devil who is called in Scripture, *The Accuser of the Brethren*, and who is more than ordinary busy with the Souls of Men, just upon their Separation, is ready as an *Evidence*; the Conscience of Man, which after its Departure from the Body, can neither be deceived by Ignorance, or stifled by Obstinacy, or imposed upon by false Reasoning, is present as a *Witness*, either to acquit, or condemn him. The Testimony of this *Witness* is true and impartial, and will inform Men, whether they have dy'd in a State of Grace and Favour with God, or are under the Sentence of Condemnation; so that there is no real Hindrance why this Judgment may not be immediately executed upon them. This, I observe, is what is generally called the *Particular Judgment*, in Contra-distinction to that *General Judgment* which shall pass upon all Men at the Last Day, before Angels and Men.

But as this *Particular Judgment* is not a sufficient Vindication of the Goodness and Justice of God in his Proceedings with Mankind; I shall, therefore, assign some Reasons why God has thought it necessary to appoint a *General Judgment*, that every Man, according to St. Paul's words, may receive the Things done in the Body, whether it be Good or Evil. And the First Reason, I shall give, why God was pleased to appoint a *General Judgment* was, to vindicate the Wisdom and Goodness of his own Providence, in the seemingly unequal Distributions

butions of it. The Prosperity of wicked Men, and the Sufferings and Afflictions which befall the Good, have been the common Argument of *Atheists* and *Infidels*, against the Wisdom and Justice of Divine Providence. Is it, say these Men, consistent with Infinite Wisdom, to punish Virtue, and reward Vice? Does God dispense a greater Share of Temporal Felicity upon Unrighteous Men, than he does upon the Righteous? Nay does he permit them many times to triumph and insult over them, and that too upon the Account of their Righteousness? Where's the Justice and Equity of such a Procedure as this? Where's his Omniscience, that he does not know this, or his Justice that he does not amend so partial an Inequality? Now to convince Mankind of the Unreasonableness of this *Objection*, and that he governs the World with equal Wisdom and Justice, there is a Day of Retribution fixed, when all these Differences of outward Life and Circumstance shall be adjusted, before the whole World. Virtue, which is now in Distress, shall then lift up its Head with Triumph; and Vice, now it may be in State and Figure, shall sink into Punishment and Confusion. The whole Creation of Men shall see the amazing Change, and give the general Attestation; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus*; Rev. xvi. 5.

But, 2dly, Another Reason why God was pleased to appoint a *General Judgment*, was; that *Christ*, who suffered an unjust Judgment from Men, and was, by a Sentence grievously severe, condemned, and put to Death, might give the most publick Proof of his own Innocence and Power, in sitting upon a lofty Throne to judge others. All his Fastings and Tears, all his exquisite

site Sufferings both of Body and Soul, in his Agony and in his Death, will then receive a visible Compensation; and the Eminency of that Dignity he shall be advanced to in that Day, shall confirm the Injustice of his Sufferings. All the Sons of *Adam* shall fall down in Obedience and Adoration before him, and *all Nations shall do him Service*. This Reason is assigned by *St. Paul*, as the Cause of our *Saviour's Exaltation*; that, having humbled himself, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross; therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given a Name that is above every Name; That at the Name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess, that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the Glory of God the Father; *Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.*

A Third Reason why God was pleased to appoint a General Judgment, was; that a full Retribution may be made to good Men in the Completion of their Happiness. There are some Ingredients wanting to a perfect and compleat Happiness before the final Sentence is passed upon Mankind. The splendid Appearance of Myriads, in their glorified and spiritualized Bodies, and the joint Harmony of so many Voices uniting in spiritual Songs, will be farther Additions of future Glory.

But, Fourthly, Another Reason why God was pleased to appoint a General Judgment, was; To make the most publick Discovery of all Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, and to punish it in the most dreadful manner. The Arts and little Subtleties which Men make use of to impose upon the World, especially in the Appearances of Virtue, as they are almost without Number, so are they many times invisible, and therefore undiscoverable by

us. The Bounds of Virtue and Vice border so near upon one another, that it is sometimes difficult to make any Distinction between them; nay, indeed, it is often impossible to do so; unless we were also acquainted with the Circumstances; and could enter into the Hearts and Consciences of Men. When Men act under the Covert and Disguise of Religion, the very Shew of Holiness is apt to blind the Understanding, and render us wholly incapable to discover the Design. These Men, how righteously soever they may seem to live, yet die in a very dangerous State; in as much as Hypocrisy and Dissimulation are at least as displeasing to God, as open Immorality and Profaneness. Now, in order to discover true Religion from the Pretences of Insincerity, it is necessary, that a Time should be fixed, wherein a full Enquiry shall be made into the Ends and Designs, and Circumstances of all the Actions of Men, and a visible Distinction made in the Rewards and Punishments of them.

A fifth Reason why God was pleased to appoint a Day of General Judgment, was; That the Souls and Bodies of Men should be judged together: For as the Soul and Body are instrumental to each other in the Commission of Sin, or the Exercise of Virtue, it is Reasonable that they should share in the same Rewards, or Punishments with one another. Now, as the Soul only gives an Account by itself in the Particular Judgment of every Man at the time of his Death, there is a Necessity that a farther Account should be given after the Resurrection, when it is once more united to the Body.

A *Sixth* Reason why God was pleased to appoint a *General Judgment*, was; not only that those good, or evil Actions, which were done by us in the time of Life, might receive their just Rewards and Punishments; but also, to reward and punish us for the good or evil Consequences of those Actions, after the time of Death: For it is morally certain, that Men are capable of doing Good, and doing Evil after they are dead. Thus for Instance; the Munificent Founders of *Colleges* and *Hospitals*, whereby the Advantages of Health, of a learned and religious Education are deriv'd down to a late Posterity, and whose Benefactions, it may be, as being very Considerable, and consequently more Diffusive are the Causes and Instruments of much Good to Mankind, are entitled to the Reward of their Bounty and Beneficence. This also is the Case of those, who, for the Improvement of useful Knowledge, or the Advancement of Religion, publish any thing whereby the common Good, or the Salvation of Mens Souls, even for Ages to come, may be any ways promoted. There are not wanting also, on the other hand, those, who, by *Printing Leud*, and *Atheistical*, and *Seditious Books* and *Pamphlets*, poison Men with vicious and rebellious Principles, even when they are in their Graves; nor those who erect *Play-Houses*, or any other *Places of Unlawful Diversion* for the Entertainment of Mankind. Since therefore, in the final Consummation of all things, there will be an universal Enquiry made into *all* the Actions of Men from the Foundation of the World, it follows, by a very Natural Consequence, that Cognizance will also be taken of those Actions, and the Good
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or Evil of them; which, tho' not properly our own, will be imputed to us, as being in some measure the *Causes* and *Instruments* of them.

These are the Reasons why, besides the *Particular Judgment* of every individual Man, at the time of his Death, God was pleased to appoint a *General Judgment* at the end of the World. But before I dismifs this Subject, it will be necessary, 1st, To explain farther who that *Person* is who shall sit as Judge at this dreadful *Tribunal*. 2^{dly}, To consider the *Place* from whence he comes to execute this great Commission, and the *Place* where this shall be done. 3^{dly}, I shall say something of the *Persons* who are to be judged. And, *Last-ly*, I shall take some Notice of the *final Sentence* which, at that *Time*, shall be passed upon all Men.

In the 1st Place, I shall consider the *Person* who is to be the Judge, and that is our Blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. The Eternal Son of God, who knows all the Actions of Men, and will pass Sentence upon them with the strictest Justice and Impartiality, shall decide the everlasting State of Mankind. He shall descend from the Throne of his Glory in a bright and shining Cloud; as he himself assures us, *Mat. xxv. 31, 32. When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory: And before him shall be gathered all Nations; and he shall separate them from one another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats. This was the Commission given by God himself as St. Peter tells us, That it was He, who was ordained of God, to be the Judge*

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of Quick and Dead; Acts x. 42. St. Paul confirms the same Doctrine; Acts xvii. 31. God hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead. And St. John in his Gospel, chap. v. 22, 27. expresses himself to the same purpose: The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son; and hath given him Authority to execute Judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

But, 2dly, I shall now consider the Place from whence this Judge shall come to execute this great Commission, and the Place also where he shall fix his awful Tribunal, that he may be seen and heard by the whole Body of Mankind; and that the Justice of his Sentence may be ratified and confirmed by the universal Voice of all Nations. Now the Place our Lord descends from, upon this important Occasion, is the Throne of God, seated in the highest Heavens, where he now sits in Glory at his right Hand. The Place he shall descend to is the lowest Region of the Air, where he will visibly erect his Throne in the Sight of the whole World. This is part of the Description given by the Judge himself of the State and Grandeur of that Day; Ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven. And St. Paul gives us a more particular Account of the great Circumstances that attend it: The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God; and then shall we be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet

meet the Lord in the Air : 1 Theff. 4. 16, 17. This is what was also foretold by the Prophet Joel ? *I will gather all Nations, and bring them into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and there will I plead with them ;* Chap. iii. 2. It is generally concluded from these words, That the General Judgment, in the Last Day, will be held in the Valley of Jehoshaphat ; both because the word *Jehoshaphat*, in the Hebrew, signifies *The Judgment of God*, as also because this *Valley* is near to *Jerusalem*, on the East-side of the *Temple*, as *St. Jerom* testifies in his *Commentaries* on the Chapter above-mentioned. Besides, there is no Situation, in the whole Body of the Earth, so convenient for so great a Transaction ; for from hence we have a full Prospect of the City of *Jerusalem*, where our Saviour preached his Gospel, and foretold himself, that the General Judgment should be. From hence also we have a View of *Mount Calvary*, the Place where *Christ* was crucified ; and of *Mount Olivet*, from whence, after he had triumphed over Death and the Grave, he ascended to his Father. To this Place, attended with an innumerable Retinue of Angels, will our Lord descend ; when, in the Language of the Prophet, *Thousands of Thousands shall minister unto him, and Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand shall stand before him : Dan. vii. 10.* This, I believe, is the lowest Account of the Number of those Blessed Spirits which shall then attend him : For, according to the Opinion of *Dionysius the Areopagite*, and *Thomas Aquinas*, the Number of Angels does far exceed the Number of all Corporeal Beings. All this August Assembly, clothed in spiritual and refined Bodies, will add a farther Magnificence to his

his Illustrious Appearance, according to that Expression of St. John: *After this I beheld, and, lo! a great Multitude, which no Man could number, of all Nations, and Kindred, and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands: Rev. vii. 9.*

The next thing to be considered, is, the Persons who are to be judged; and that is the whole Body of Mankind from the Creation of the World. The great Difference and Distinction of Men, as to outward Circumstances of Fortune, which the present State and Order of Things, make it necessary should be preserved in the World, shall then be entirely lost, in the only Discriminations of Sin and Punishment, and of Grace and Glory. For as every Man is capable of discerning between Good and Evil, and of acting suitably to such a Knowledge, and of giving an Account of all the Actions of his Life, it is reasonable to believe that such an Account will be demanded of him. With what Paleness, with what Trembling, with what Confusion and Convulsion of Thought, will all wicked Men appear, on that dreadful Day, in the Sight of God, of Angels, and of Men? With what holy Chearfulness and Courage will all righteous Men stand before their Judge, secure in their own Innocency, and having a Foretast of those Joys they are just entering into? But I pass on to say something,

4thly, Of the *Final Sentence* itself, which shall then pass upon all Men. In this general Consummation of all things, that the Justice and Equity of the Divine Proceedings may be manifested to the whole world, the

Books of Life and Death shall be publicly opened. This Circumstance of the General Judgment is mentioned by St. John, Rev. xx. 11, 12. *And I saw a great white Throne, and him that sat on it, from whose Face the Earth and the Heaven fled away, and there was found no Place for them. And I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God, and the Books were opened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.* St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, confirms this Doctrine, in the following Text: *Judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darknes, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Heart: Chap. iv. 5.* It is highly credible that God will spread so bright and so convincing a Light over the Minds of Men, at the Day of Judgment, that they shall not only see fully into their own Actions, but also into the Actions of other Men; and that all the Thoughts, and Words, and Actions of all Men shall be open to the view of All. The little artful Disguises of Hypocrisy shall be then taken off, and the weak Pretences of the Lyar, the Traitor, and the False Swearer be wholly baffled and confounded. This visible Publication of the general Wickedness of Mankind, will prove a kind of Foretast of the approaching Sentence; for then will come to pass what is mentioned by St. John, *And the Kings of the Earth, and the Great Men, and the Rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the Mighty Men, and every Bondman, and every Freeman shall hide themselves in the Dens, and in the Racks of the Mountains;*

Mountains; and shall say to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the Great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17. This is no less than what our Saviour himself foretold when he was going to his Crucifixion: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your Children. For, behold, the Days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the Womb that never bare, and the Paps which never gave Suck. Then shall they begin to say to the Mountains, fall on us; and to the Hills, cover us: Luke xxiii. 28, 29, 30. And then the final Sentence of good and bad Men is pronounced, which concludes the Amazing Scene.

Consider then, whosoever thou art, O Man! that thou thyself art one of the Number of those Persons, who shall be called to Judgment: See thy Judge sitting upon his Awful Tribunal; Behold thy Vices or thy Virtues all displayed before thee; Contemplate the Terrors and Confusion of the Wicked, and the Triumphs of the Righteous; Form to thyself a lively Image of this great Appearance, and then rejoyce, in the ways of thy Heart, and in the sight of thine Eyes, if thy Conscience will give the Leave. Let not the seeming Distance of that dreadful Day prevent thy best Preparation for it; for at what Distance soever the General Judgment may be, yet it is certain that the Particular Judgment, at the time of thy Death, is not far from thee; And it is no less certain, that the same Sentence, which thy Conscience shall pass upon thee at the Instant of thy Departure

parture hence, shall be ratify'd, and confirm'd in the Day of Judgment. It is therefore the highest Instance of Divine Wisdom, to look to the last Issue and Consequence of things; and That, however, distant the Day of Judgment may be, to reflect with Thyself, that Death is daily making its Approaches towards Thee. This Consideration will instruct thee in what Manner thou mayest reconcile thyself to thy Judge, and receive a blessed Sentence in the final Account of all things.

C H A P. III.

The Third Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it is, To consider the Duration of Hell Torments.

HAVING now finished the Consideration of *Death*, and a *Future Judgment*, I shall proceed, in Order, to consider the two great Consequences of them; *The Torments of Hell*, and the *Joys of Heaven*; for one of these two States will be the eternal Portion of every Man living. But the Truth of it is; that these two States are so different, and indeed contrary to one another, that the one places us for ever in endless Misery, and Pain; the other in the full and unchangeable Fruition of Happiness and Glory.

In treating on the deplorable State and Condition of the *Damned in Hell*, I shall only *First*, brietly mention something concerning this Punishment as to the *Place* of it; *Secondly*, As to the *Continuance* and *Duration*; and *Thirdly*, As to the *Measures*, and *Degrees* of it. Now the Places where the Damned shall suffer their Punishment,

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ment, it is very probable, will be in a deep bottomless Pit, in the Centre of the Earth, at the remotest distance from God, secluded for ever from the Chearfulness of *Light*, and the Refreshments of Air. The remote Distance of all heavenly Glory from the Punishments of the Damned, is fully evidenc'd in that Sentence pass'd upon the Devil. *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning; for thou hast said in thine Heart, I will ascend above the Heights of the Clouds, I will be like the most High; yet shalt thou be brought down to Hell, to the side of the Pit: Isa. xiv. 12, 13, 14, 15.* This is the Place of Punishment also for all wicked and ungodly Men.

Now, this Consideration of the Place of Suffering, does also naturally suggest to us the Consideration of three other Ingredients of endless Misery; and those are, First, The *Darkness* of this Place, Secondly, The *Straitness* of it, And, Thirdly, The *Poverty*, and great Want of all Comforts, and Refreshments in it. For since the Situation of Hell lies in the Centre of the Earth, impenetrable either by the Sun, the Moon, or the Stars, it is Impossible it can be any ways enlightned, but by its own sulphureous Flames; which will rather encrease, than abate the Miseries of the Damned. For by this gloomy and obscure Light, they will have the said Privilege of seeing their *Relations*, or *Friends*, or *Acquaintance*, who it may be, have been the Authors of their Ruin, and of beholding their own Nakedness, their own Chains, and their own, and others Torments; the very sight of which is of itself sufficient doubly to enkindle the Fires of Hell. They will have no Prospect of any thing which can give them the last Delight or Comfort. O

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Lightsome Darkneſs! O Obſcure Light! a Light that hides from their Eyes the Sight of any thing which can recreate the Senſes, or rejoice the Heart; a Darkneſs which preſents them with the horrid View of every thing that is ghawly and affrighting.

The *Straitneſs* and cloſe Confinement of Hell is, in the ſecond Place, another *Ingredient* of endleſs Miſery. For if the whole Body of the Earth when compared with the Dimenſions of the Heavens, is little more than an *indivifible Point*; and if the whole Space of Hell is ſo far from containing the whole Body of the Earth, or indeed the half of it, that it is fixed only in the Center, or middle Part of it; and, Laſtly, if the Number of the Damned, as is generally believed, exceeds the Number of the Bleſſed; the Conſequence is plain and undeniable, that Hell is a Place of great Confinement. Let the Rich and Mighty Men, the Kings and Princes of the Earth, who are now buſy in extending their Conqueſts, and who enlarge their Wiſhes with the World, conſider what is the End of *Nebuchadonozor*, *Darius*, and *Alexander*, and other unjuſt Princes. How are they encloded in the narrow Compaſs of Hell and the Grave? Vanity of Vanities! Thus for Men to ſtretch their Deſires, and to widen in their Acquiſitions, by adding, in the Language of the Prophet, *House to Houſe, and Field to Field*, and, at the ſame time to be Unmindful, that all at laſt will end in Confinement, without any Proſpect of Enlargement, to endleſs Ages,

But what need I to mention now a *Third Ingredient* of infinite Miſery? viz. the *Poverty*, and great Want of all Comforts and Refreshments in this Place of Punishment.

nishment. Naked; and stript of all things which might ease and alleviate our Pains, we shall abound in nothing but Torments and Destruction. It is true, the Remembrance of past Pleasures will still continue with us, and the bitter Reflection of those Delights, with which we abounded here, whether in *Eating and Drinking*, or in *Dressing*, or in *Sports and Recreations*, or in *Gardening and Fine Furniture*, or in *Balls and Plays*, will only serve to increase our Pain. The Misery of our present Condition will be Heightened and Improved, by considering what a Figure we made in this World; and we shall say with those wicked Men in the Book of *Wisdom*; *What hath Pride profited us? Or what good have Riches, with our Vaunting brought us? Behold, all these things are passed away like a Shadow.*

I proceed now to consider, 2dly, The *Duration* of future Punishments. And here, if the Question were put to me, *How long will the Torments of Hell continue?* I wish I could answer, that they will not continue above *sixty or seventy Years*, or the Space of human Life in this World. But, alas! there is no Comparison, in point of Duration, between this and the next Life; for Time will then be succeeded only by Eternity. So that the Sufferings of wicked Men, in a future State, will continue as long as God shall continue to be Eternal; who as he had no Beginning, so will he also continue to be without End. The Sufferings of the Damned shall continue as long, as the Happiness of the Blessed: In short, the Wicked shall continue in a State of Eternal Death, so long as God himself shall live; and unless he ceases to be God, which is morally impossible, the Wicked can never cease from Punishment: "O miserable
" Life,

“ Life, wherein we are always dying ! O unhappy
 “ Death, wherein we always live ! If I call thee Life,
 “ how is it that thou killest always ? If I give thee the
 “ Name of Death, how is it that thou continuest for
 “ ever ? I will therefore neither call thee by the name
 “ of Life, nor Death ; because Life has sometimes
 “ Rest, and Death has also an End ; But thou hast Nei-
 “ ther. How therefore shall I perfectly describe thee,
 “ unless I say of thee, Tho’ that will fall short of the
 “ Torments which attend thee, that thou art the Com-
 “ plication of all the Pains and Miseries both of Life
 “ and Death ?

There remains now to be considered the inexpressible Greatness of this Punishment, as to the *Measures* and *Degrees* of it: For the Punishment of Hell is not any One single Punishment, but, if I may so express it, a whole Body of Torments, attacking at once all the Powers and Faculties both of Soul and Body, in all their Outward and Inward *Sensations*. It is indeed as impossible for any Man, in a State of Mortality, to have any thorow Knowledge or Experience of *all* those Heavenly Delights which make up the Happiness of the Blessed, as it is of *all* those *Ingredients* which constitute the Misery of a damned Person. And whereas our earthly Sufferings generally affect us only in one part of the Body at a time ; it may be in the Eye, or the Hand, or the Foot ; All the Torments of Hell are felt at once in every Part of the Body, in the highest Degree ; so that the inextinguishable Fire shall encircle the whole Body with its Flames, and yet never consume it. *Depart, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire,* says the Judge ; *Mat. xxv. 41.* Where, as the Prophet *Isaiah* says, *Their Worm*

Worm shall not die, neither shall their Fire be quenched;
 Chap. lxvi. 24. The same Expression is thrice repeated
 by our *Saviour*, in one Chapter of *St. Mark's Gospel*,
 with an Intention doubtless to warn Men of the Eter-
 nity of Hell-Torments, and Imprint, with more Efficacy,
 such an awakening Consideration upon their Minds.
 To see a Criminal burnt to Death upon a State-Account,
 tho' the Torment is not lasting, is a shocking Sight; and
 'tis Punishment enough even to behold it. If the same
 Person should continue in the same Degree of Suffering
 for a whole Day, a Man must be lost to all Sense of
 Pity and Compassion, who could look upon so sad a
 Spectacle. Let every Man therefore thus argue the
 Case with himself: " If I cannot behold, without a
 " deep Concern, the burning of a living Man, whose
 " Pains affect me no otherwise than by the Sight of
 " them; how can I endure those Flames in my own Per-
 " son, only for one Hour, or one Day, or one Month,
 " or one Year? Or suppose that I was capable of bear-
 " ing my Punishment so long, yet how can I be able
 " to dwell with everlasting Burnings? Why do I then
 " expose my self to so much Danger? If I do not be-
 " lieve the Eternity of Hell-Torments, where is my
 " Faith? If I do, where is my Reason, my Judgment,
 " my Prudence, that I do not look before me, before
 " the irreversible Sentence is gone forth? It is better
 " for me to think of these Punishments, than to suffer
 " them; and if I think of them as I should do, this will
 " be the best means to prevent my suffering of them:
 " For if I live under a constant Thought of the Great-
 " ness and Duration of eternal Punishment, this will
 " enliven and actuate my Endeavours to avoid it; and
 " this

“ this will convince me farther, that the only means
 “ to avoid it, is to adorn and enrich my Soul with
 “ such holy Dispositions, as shall qualify me for the
 “ Enjoyment of Heavenly Glory; That so when Death
 “ shall make a Separation of my Soul and Body, I may
 “ be found prepared, and hear that Blessed Sentence
 “ which shall be pronounced upon all good Men, *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

C H A P. IV.

The Fourth Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is; To consider the Glorious and Happy State of the Blessed in Heaven.

THE State and Happiness of the Blessed comes now to be considered; and in discoursing on so Noble and Sublime a Subject, I shall observe the same Method as I did in the preceeding Chapter; and therefore shall take notice, *First*, Of the Place. *Secondly*, Of the Continuance. And, *Thirdly*, Of the Measures and Degrees of all Heavenly Felicity. Now the Place of this Happiness is *Paradise*, or the Highest Heavens; Eternity is the Time of its Duration, and the Measures and Degrees of it, if the Expression may be allowed, are infinite and unmeasurable.

I shall begin with the *First* Consideration, and that is the Place; which is *Paradise*, or the Highest Heavens, far above all the Mountains of the Earth, above all the Elements, and above all the Stars. It is for this Reason called in Scripture, *The House of God, the City of the Great King, the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.*

Jerusalem. From this Sublime Situation of the Heavenly *Paradise*, it is reasonable to conclude, That the Privileges of this City do far transcend those of the most Opulent and Magnificent Cities in the World. For, in the 1st Place, by how much the Higher the Situation of any Place is, it is reasonable to believe it is so much the Larger, and more Capacious; because as the Figure of the Earthly and Heavenly Globe is Round or Orbicular, so that the Centre of the Universe is fixed in the Body of the Earth; it follows by consequence, that the Highest Heavens contain in Compass almost an *infinite Space*.

The Place of Residence therefore of Blessed Spirits, and of glorified Souls and Bodies, as it is in its Situation the most High, so is it in its Capacity the most Enlarged; as the Place of Hell-Torments, on the other hand, is the most Confined, because it lays low and deep in the Centre of the Earth. I must add, 2^{dly}, That the higher the Situation of any Place is, the more Pure is it also, and the more Free from Vapours and Exhalations. This Notion is entirely agreeable to the Natural Subordination of the *Elements*. Thus for Instance; the *Water* is of a more pure Quality than the *Earth*, the *Air* than the *Water*, the *Fire* than the *Air*, the *Heavens* than the *Fire*, and the *Empyrean Heavens* than the *Starry Firmament*. Lastly, The Higher any Situation is, it is also, in a fair way of Reasoning, much more Safe and Free from Danger; for Heaven suffers no Violence but from the Prayers of the Righteous.

1st, Then the Seat of the Blessed is very Large and Capacious; insomuch that the Glorified Bodies of just Men made perfect, can, in an Instant, move with incredible

credible Swiftneſs from Place to Place, without tiring. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the Greatneſs of this Pleaſure, ariſing from ſuch an Agility of Body; when in one moment it ſhall Traverſe the whole Heavens, and behold the bleſſed Society of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apoſtles, of Saints, Angels, and God; while the Bodies of the Damned in Hell, at the ſame time, continue, and will for ever continue, in everlaſting Confinement. But this Happineſs will yet receive a farther Increaſe, inasmuch as the Bleſſed above ſhall dwell for ever in a Pure and a ſerene Heaven, not clouded or overcaſt with any Miſt, or Darkneſs, or any Vapours, or Exhalations whatſoever; while the Inhabitants of Hell, miſerable beyond the Hopes of Mercy, are forced to lie down in thick Darkneſs and eternal Night. What ſhall I ſay more of the *Heavenly Jeruſalem*, ſecured from Injury and Violence by the height of its own Situation, or rather by the Innocence of its Inhabitants, and the Arm of God? *Praise thy God, O Jeruſalem! Praise thy God, O Sion!* ſays David: *for he hath made ſaſt the Bars of thy Gates:* *Psalm cxlviii. 12, 13.* By which Expreſſion is not meant, that the Gates of Heaven are continually ſhut for fear of Danger: For we read in the *Revelations*, *That the Gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by Day; for there ſhall be no Night there.* Chap. xxi. 25. So that the Senſe of thoſe words of the *Psalmiſt*, is, that God hath ſecured it from Danger by its own Exaltation: For altho' the Devil contended with *St. Michael* the Archangel, yet this was not done by way of Invaſion, or an Aſcent from Earth to Heaven, he himſelf being an Inhabitant of it; but not being

confirmed in Grace, but puffed up with Pride, and affecting to be equal with God himself, he fell, like Lightning from Heaven, into the Regions of Darkness and Despair. And because the Kingdom of Heaven is settled upon the unalterable Foundations of Peace and Order, it was therefore impossible that so great an Enemy to Peace should maintain his Station there; and from that time no Man is admitted as a Citizen of the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, who is not in a confirmed State of Grace, and perpetual Peace.

I go on now to consider the *Continuance* of this Blessedness. Now the Time of the Duration of the Joys of Heaven, since the Fall of *Satan*, is Unmeasurable; an Endless Duration, without any successive Returns of Day and Night. This is what is attested by the Angel with an Oath: *And he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created Heaven, and the Things that are therein; and the Earth, and the Things that are therein; and the Sea, and the Things that are therein, that there should be Time no longer: Rev. x. 6.* And our Blessed Saviour, who was Truth it self, gives this Account of the Sentence which shall pass upon all Men in the Day of Judgment: *The Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, and the Righteous into Life eternal: Mat. xxv. 46.* The only Difference between good and bad Men, at the Day of Judgment, will be this; That wicked Men will be affrighted at the Prospect of Immortality which is before them, as being indeed the saddest Ingredient of their Misery; but the good Man will lift up his Head with Triumph upon his Entrance into that State, where he shall live in Happiness for ever

ever, without any fear of Dying; where he shall stand immovable in his own Innocence for ever, without any fear of Falling. O Eternity inconceivably Blessed! How are our Thoughts lost in the Contemplation of thee, which art incomprehensible? Thou fillest all the Capacities of an Heaven-born Soul with Sincere and Unbounded Delights: Thou includest, in thine own Nature, as much Happiness as infinite Wisdom can contrive, as much Happiness as Man can receive, nay even as God himself can give.

I come now to consider, *Thirdly*, The Measures and Degrees of this Happiness of the Blessed: And this, I think, I may be allowed to lay down by way of *Maxim*, That whatsoever is Lovely and Desirable upon Earth, which is always alloy'd with some mixture of Bitterness; This, and infinitely more, the Blessed in Heaven shall enjoy without the least Disturbance, or Intermission. The most valuable Dispensations of Providence we enjoy in this World, are Honour, Power, Riches, and Pleasure. Now the great Honour and Dignity, to which a Man is advanced in his Glorified Body, does equally surpass our Thoughts, as it does our Admiration. Indeed it would appear almost incredible, if He, who cannot lye, had not assured us of the Greatness of it: *To him that overcometh, says our Saviour, will I grant to sit with me on my Throne, even as I also overcame, and sit upon my Father's Throne: Rev. iii. 21.* How infinitely below this Eminency of Glory are all the Honours and high Stations of the World? To sit upon the Throne of God, and with God, how is this the very Heighth and Pinnacle of all Heavenly Honour? With what Tri-

umphs, with what Applauses does the *Heavenly Jerusalem* resound, upon the Exaltation of a *frail Man*, once a *sinful Man*, to the Throne of God, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the only Ruler of Princes?*

But, *Secondly*, The Power also of the Blessed, in a State of Glorification will be no ways inferiour to that *Dignity and Honour*, to which they shall then be advanced. The Promise given by our Lord, in his Gospel, to the *faithful Servant*, that he would make him *Ruler over all his Goods*, is a full Confirmation of this Truth. The plain Sense of which words is this: That a *faithful Servant of Christ Jesus*, in a State of Blessedness, shall, in some measure, be made Partaker of that *Power*, which God himself exercises over all his *Creatures*. How, great the Power of God is, over all *Created Beings*, is Visible to us in many Instances of it: So that, in Truth and Reality; the Blessed in Heaven, shall be Exalted to the Dignity of *Kings and Princes* over the whole World, to all Ages. This is no more than what is specify'd in the *final Sentence* of good Men: *Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the World;* Matt. xxv. 34.

But then, in the *Third Place*, what shall I say of those *Riches*, and that *Abundance*, which the Blessed shall inherit in a state of Glory? It is sufficient to say of them, that they are Durable and Lasting Possessions, *such Treasures, as neither Moth, nor Rust can corrupt, nor Thieves break thro' and steal*. The Royal Prophet assures us, that *Riches and Plenteousness should be in his House*; and St. Paul, in his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chap. xv. 28. That God shall be *All in All*; which words are

are thus expounded by *Theophylact*: As in a State of Mortality, the Things Necessary for the Support, the Convenience, and the Credit of human Life, are Meat, Drink, Apparel, Houses, Riches, Honour, and Pleasure, and the like; in a State of Immortality, the Case will be far otherwise; For the Vision of God, and the Fruition of his Presence, is the Fullness of all Things: The Blessed, therefore, in Heaven, shall enjoy every thing that is Valuable, that is Incorruptible, or that indeed is Worth enjoying, in the most Plentiful manner. *St. Jerom* improves this Opinion, and assures us; That God will not only be the Fullness of all Temporal, but also of all Spiritual Blessings to Men in a State of Happiness: For as in this Life God does not communicate every Grace to every Man, but bestows a larger Share of it on some than he does on others; as of Wisdom to *Solomon*, Goodness to *David*, and Patience to *Job*: In the Life to come, every blessed *Saint* shall receive, in the fullest Measure, every Heavenly Grace. What a Pleasure and Satisfaction would it be to a Covetous Man, in this World, could he obtain the Possession of *all* the Riches in the Universe? How would it please the Luxurious Man, could he indulge himself in *all* the Voluptuousness and Excess his Soul longeth after? What would the Ambitious Man give, could he ascend to that Eminency of Dignity and Honour, which his own aspiring Thoughts lead him up to? And yet to aim at Riches, or Pleasures, or Preferments, is only to fix our Thoughts upon such things as are fleeting and inconstant; and, what are the bitter Consequences of all earthly Satisfaction, they are generally followed, either with Loathsomeness, and Remorse of Conscience,
or

or with Shame, Infamy, and Want. The Inference therefore is just and reasonable, that we unite all our Thoughts and Affections in God, who alone is able to satisfy all the Desires and Capacities of an immortal Soul, and that too as long as the Soul shall last.

But, *Fourthly*, The Joy and Pleasure, which is also Part of the Happiness of the Blessed, is no way inferior to the Riches and Abundance they enjoy in Heaven. Both St. Paul, and the Prophet *Isaiah*, are lost in the Contemplation of Heavenly Glory, and give the best Description of it, by telling us, that 'tis impossible to be Described: *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things, which God hath prepared for them that love him: 2 Cor. ii. 9. Isa. lxiv. 4.* The Joys, the Pleasures, the Delights, the Sweetness arising from the Situation, the Company, the Harmony of the Blessed, like other transitory Enjoyments of this World, never satiate and cloy the Mind, but are always Fresh and Entertaining. All Pleasure, as *Philosophy* expresses it, lays in a suitable Agreement between the *Faculty* and the *Object*, and affirms, that the closer the Union is between them, the greater Pleasure is occasioned by that Union. Now in the whole Order of Created Beings, there is no *Faculty* so Large, so Lively, so Capacious of Pleasure, as the *Rational Soul*. In the whole Order of Heavenly Beings, there is no *Object* so Lovely, so Delightful, so Agreeable to this *Faculty*, as God. *O taste and see how gracious the Lord is,* says the Royal Prophet, *Psal. xxxiv. 8.* And the *Wiseman*, speaking of the Beauty of the *Sun* and *Stars*, argues the Superiority, in that respect, of their

Great

Great Creator over them. If Men are delighted with the Beauty of the Lights of Heaven, let them know how much better the Lord of them is ; for the first Author of Beauty hath created them. If they were astonished at their Power and Virtue, let them understand by them, how much Mightier he is that made them : For by the Greatness and Beauty of the Creatures, proportionably the Maker of them is seen : Wisdom xiii. 3, 4, 5.

But, Lastly, There is no Union so Close as that of the Soul with God ; for, according to St. Paul's Rule, *He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit* ; 1 Cor. vi. 17. All Pleasure which arises from Sensation, is generally superficial, and does but barely reach the Soul ; with what Measures of spiritual Complacency then shall the Immortal Spirit be filled, when it is united to him, who is the Fullness of all Delight ? I must confess, that I am entirely at a Loss to Comprehend, much less to Express the inconceivable Pleasure which springs from this sacred Union, or rather Communion with God.

I shall only add, That all Human Pleasure, which affects Men by outward Sensations, and arises from a Union of the Soul with created Objects, is, at the best, but of a short Continuance ; whereas those Delights, which spring from an entire Union of the human Soul with God, are Infinite ; and shall continue in being, as long as God, and Heaven shall last.

C H A P. V.

The Fifth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is; To settle and dispose of our Worldly Affairs, by making a Will.

HAVING enlarg'd on the Consideration of the four last Things, *Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell*, I go on to consider, What every Man ought to do, in the next Place, who would effectually Prepare for his *Departure* out of this World. Now as frequent *Law-Suits* commence, and different Demands are made, and many Disputes arise among *Families* and *Relations*, occasioned by the Negligence of Men, in not taking a due Care to prevent these Mischiefs, by settling their Temporal Concerns; it is therefore a Duty incumbent on every Man, as he is answerable for the ill Effects and Consequences of his own Omission, to dispose of what God has given him, according to such Rules of *Prudence, Justice, and Charity*, as he shall judge most Necessary. This is the Command of God, by the Prophet *Isaiah*, to King *Hezekiah*, *Thus saith the Lord, set thine House in order, for thou shalt surely die*; Chap. xxxviii.

Now that Men may discharge this Obligation with Prudence to themselves, and a just Regard to others, it will be highly expedient, either to make their *Will* when they are in a *State of Health*, that so when
Death

Death approaches them, the Consideration of worldly Affairs may not break in upon their more serious Contemplations; or otherwise in the *Beginning* of *Sickness* while their Thoughts are Clear, not Discomposed with Pain, or Weakness, or the sad Apprehensions of Futurity; by which means they are rendered either wholly Incapable of disposing their worldly Affairs, or at least in so Discreet and Beneficial a manner, as they ought to do.

As the Relations between Man and Man in this World, and the Obligations we have to them, and the Circumstances of them are widely Different from each other, it will be impossible to prescribe such a *Set* of Particular Directions, as to the making our *Will*, as shall reach all Cases; yet I shall endeavour to offer some *General* Rules and Considerations, which, as I conceive, may be of some Advantage in this matter.

Now the *first* Provision to be made, in making a *Will*, is to do Justice to others, in an Equitable Satisfaction of those Debts which we have contracted with them: For it is morally impossible that any Man can leave the World with a Quiet Conscience, who lays under any Obligations of this Kind to his Neighbour; I mean, if he be able to Discharge them; for otherwise, it is much to be hoped, that a Willing Mind, and a Sincere Repentance, will be looked upon, by God, as a Full Compensation of all Acts of Injury and Injustice. The *second* General Rule a Man ought to Observe in this Respect, is; to Bequeath what he has to Those, whom He in Justice and Honesty shall Judge to have the Best Right to it; a Principal Regard being always had to

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Them who are most Nearly Related to him. The Obligations of Nature, the Tyes of Blood, and the great Law of *Doing as we would be done by*, whatever Liberty may be allowed by *Human Laws* to the contrary, plead very strongly for such an Equitable *Distribution*. In the Disposal of such Matters as are properly his own, whether by *Acquisition, Grant, or otherwise*; let him, in the 1st Place, consider in what Instances he may mostly promote the *Glory of God*; because the *Glory of God* ought to be the Chief end of all our Actions. This is agreeable to *St. Paul's Charge, Whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* The way, whereby all *Natural Beings* do promote the *Glory of God*, is by the Curious Fineness of their *Workmanship*, and by Acting according to those stated Laws which *Providence* has prescribed them. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work: Psal. xix. 1.* The ways whereby all *Moral Agents* do principally promote this great end, are, 1st, By transcribing the Perfections of God into themselves. And, 2dly, By Giving a Share of what he has bestowed on them, in some Instances or another, for his *Worship and Service*.

But then, 2dly, Some Regard, in settling our worldly Affairs, ought to be had to the *Wants and Necessities* of others. If a Man's Circumstances are very Considerable, after a reasonable Provision made for his *Family*, he ought to give the Overplus, in his *Life-time*, to his poor Neighbours; or if he has been wanting in that Respect, he lays under a double Obligation to do this at the *Time of his Death*. This, as I observed in another

ther Chapter, is the concurrent Opinion of the most Celebrated Divines. If a Man be at a loss in what Instances he may best Dispose of his Effects to the Glory of God, and the Good of others, let him have recourse to the Judgment and Advice of some *Honest Man* in this Affair; having always a due regard to the *Time, Place, Manner*, and other *Circumstances* of Action; and disposing his Charity, according to the different Wants and Exigencies of Men. Sometimes perhaps his Charity will be most advantageously bestowed in building a *Church*, or in founding a *College*; at another *Time*, or in another *Place*, it may be, in erecting an *Hospital*, or in building an *Alms-House*, or a *School*, for the Cure, or Maintenance, or Education of the Miserable, and Distressed, and Ignorant Part of Mankind. In short; a *Clear Head*, and a *Charitable Heart*, as *St. Ambrose* affirms; or a^s *St. Gregory* otherwise, tho' much to the same purpose, expresses it, *Charity joined with Prudence, and Prudence with Charity*, will furnish a Man with the Best Directions in the Disposal of his Temporal Concerns.

There is one Consideration, of some Moment, yet remaining; which, however, may serve as an Excellent Rule in the Distributions of Charity, and that is; That whether a Man bestows his Bounty to others, when he is in a State of Health, or leaves it by *Legacy* at his Death, he take great Care, that he be in a State of Grace and Favour with God; because his own Worthiness will recommend his Charity, and make it more Acceptable to Him. The *Temporal Offerings* of Wicked Men, no less than their *Spiritual Sacrifices*, are an Abomination to the Lord; Besides, that the Ends and Designs of their Charity, are widely different from

the Intentions of Good Men in acting after the same manner. The End and Design of the One is generally to court the Favour and Applause of Men, of the Other to approve themselves to God Only. The Commendable Purpose of the One is to Do Good to others, merely for the sake of so Doing; the selfish Intention of the Other, is to have a Regard to themselves, in the Commendations of others. In short; there is, generally speaking, as much Difference in the Distributions of Good and Bad Men, as there is between Necessity and Choice.

CH A P. VI.

The Sixth Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is; To Practice the Duty of Confession.

AFTER the Consideration of the *Four last Things*, and the *Necessity* of Settling our worldly Affairs by *Will*; the Next Duty in Course, is *Confession*; or a Particular and Distinct Acknowledgment of our Sins to God. Now tho' God has required such a Particular Confession to him, it is not to be supposed, that He, who is Omniscience it self, and at one Intuitive View, sees into all the Actions of Men, and the Circumstances of them, requires This by way of *Information*, but only as an *Evidence* of our Sorrow and Humiliation for them. And because the Infirmities of Age, or the Violence of a Distemper, or the Hurry a Man is in, in Settling his Temporal Affairs, or an Unwillingness to leave the World, and the sad Apprehensions of Futurity;

rity ; I say Because One, or More, or it may be All these Causes are apt to Incumber and Distract the Thoughts ; it is therefore necessary, that a Man be Frequent in the Practice of this Duty in the time of *Health*. For tho' it is not Absolutely Impossible that a Man be rightly Disposed and Qualified for such a Performance, in the time of *Age*, or *Sickness* ; and tho' it may be also Necessary to confess how unrighteously he has lived in the World, just when he is going out of it ; yet Reason and Observation will both convince him, that this may be done with more Safety, and more Prudence, when he has a free Exercise of his Thoughts, and the right Use of his Reason.

Now this Duty of *Confession* will appear highly Reasonable on these two Accounts : In the *First* Place, That without Confession there can be no Repentance. And, *Secondly*, That without Confession there can be no Forgiveness.

And, *First*, There can be no True Repentance without *Confession* : For how can any Man be said to be sorry for any thing, when he will not so much as Own it ? And tho' a bare Acknowledgment of Sin is not of it self sufficient to reconcile a Man to God ; yet I cannot see how he can be sincerely Penitent without it ; Confession being the Ground and Foundation, or rather a necessary Part of true Repentance. Not to acknowledge a Sin, is equally Criminal with its Concealment ; in this Case our Silence is a Private Justification of it ; and Proceeds either from a wicked Obstinacy, or wilful Ignorance ; whereas a sincere Repentance expresses it self in an Open and Ingenuous Abhorrence of Sin,

Sin, and a Real Conviction Both of the Guilt and Punishment of it.

But, *Secondly*, Without Confession, there can be no Forgiveness. This was the Condition of Pardon under the Old Law: *And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that Thing;* Lev. v. 5. This is farther confirmed in the New Testament; *If we Confess our Sins, God is Faithful and Just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness:* 1 John i. 9. In all Covenants it is expressly stipulated, that the Conditions be fulfilled, before the Promises, annexed to the Observance of those Covenants, be made Good. If God Promises Forgiveness upon the Condition of Confession, it is Reasonable to Infer, that without Confession there will be no Forgiveness: For as God was pleased, of his own Free Grace, to make such a Promise to Mankind, he has certainly a Right to with-hold the Execution of that Promise, unless the Conditions, upon which that Promise was made, be actually fulfilled.

Now that this Duty of *Confession* may prove Acceptable to God, and Effectual to the Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin, I shall consider, *2dly*, In *what manner* it ought to be performed.

And, in the 1st Place, One good Qualification of this Duty is *Humility*; which, as it respects *Confession*, consists in a Deep Sense of our own Unworthiness in Provoking God, and in Taking the whole Guilt of all our Sins upon our selves. It is the Ordinary Practice of Mankind to shift off their Vices upon others. In the First Instance of Disobedience in the World, the Man laid the Fault upon the Woman, and the Woman upon the Devil.

Devil. The Force and Prevalency of *Nature* is sometimes urged as an Extenuation of our Crimes; Many times we attribute them to the Power of the *Devil*, and sometimes, rather than bare the Blame of them our selves, by a Blasphemous Pretence to Holiness, we shall make even God Himself the Author of them: Whereas it is Certain, in the 1st Place, That God has given to every Man a sufficient Measure of Grace and Power to Resist the most vicious Inclinations of *Human Nature*. 2^{dly}, That all the Power the *Devil* has over Mankind, is only that of *Temptation*, and not of Force and Compulsion to Sin. And, 3^{dly}, That God is so far from being the Author of Sin, as he is a Being of all Possible Purity and Perfection, that he has expressed the Utmost Aversion to it, and will Punish it in the most Dreadful Manner.

But, Secondly, Another Qualification of Confession, is a Deep Sorrow and Concern for Sin. The Weight of Sin sat so Heavy upon the Soul of the Crucified *Jesus*, that it made him Sigh, and Sweat, and Bleed, and Die. Behold, and see, says our Saviour, expressing his own Agony, *if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his Fierce Anger*. Now if the Sins of other Men did so grievously afflict Him, who himself had no Sin; how ought every Man, with the most sensible Compunction of Heart, to bewail his own? See the Behaviour of St. *Austin*, in the History of his Life by *Possidius*, on this Occasion: "In his last Illness, says the *Historian*, he ordered the Penitential *Psalms* of *David* to be fairly Transcribed, and, when he lay upon his Death-Bed, to be placed in
" open

“ open View before him, on which his Eyes were constantly fixed, not without a great Profusion of Tears. And to Prevent any Interruptions which might happen, about ten Days before his Death, he gave it in Charge to his Servants, that no one should be permitted to come into his Chamber, but at those Hours, when his Physicians attended him, or any proper Refreshments were brought to him; for all the Rest of his Time was imployed in Confession and Prayer.” This was the Practice of this Heavenly Wife Man, who lived to the 43d Year of his Age; in which time he Constantly preached the Word of God, and employed himself Continually in writing for the Benefit of the *Christian Church*, of which he was a great Ornament. He was of an Even and Affable Temper, Unwilling to be Provoked himself, or to Offend others; and severely Exemplary in all the Duties of Confession, Repentance, and Devotion, to the time of his Death.

But, *Thirdly*, Another Qualification of Confession, is, That it be *Universal*, and Extend it self to all Kinds of Sin whatsoever; whether of *Ignorance*, *Infirmity*, or *Presumption*: And that for this Reason; Because all Sin is an Offence against God. If a Man Doubts whether he has committed such or such a *Fact*, or not, he is not obliged, in this Case, to confess against Conviction; yet shall he say that he has not sinned! No; if a Man questions the *Fact*, let him confess *Conditionally*, *If I have Committed This or That Fact, Lord pardon thy Servant in this Thing*. If he is Convinced of the *Fact*, but doubts whether it be a *Sin*, or not, his Confession, in this Case, must be *Conditional* also.

But

But besides this *Confession* of Sin to God, there is another Kind of Confession also, which has been the Constant Practice of the *Christian Church* in all Ages, and which is of singular Benefit and Advantage; and that is to Lay open the whole State and Condition of the Soul to the *Priest*. This Practice is of Great Service in many Respects; in the 1st Place, As it highly promotes the Peace and Quiet of Men, in thus unburthening their Consciences. 2^{dly}, In that the *Priest*, by this means, is better Informed of the Spiritual Necessities of Men; and Consequently that he is Qualified to adapt his Advice to them with more Success. And, 3^{dly}, That the Person so Confessing, will be better Qualified to Receive the Benefit of *Absolution*; For God, who has the First and Only Right of Forgiving Sins, hath Deputed this Power to his *Ambassadors* here, to Pronounce this *Absolution*. St. *Ambrose*, in his *Comment* on the 38th Psalm, says, That he that denies this Power in the *Priest*, it no better than a *Novatian*. St. *Cyprian* is entirely of the same Opinion, This Power is derived down from the Apostles, to whom it was first Delegated, to their Successors. The Original Commission is, *Whosoever Sins ye Remit, they are Remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye Retain, they are Retained*; John xx. 23. Whosoever therefore assents to the Doctrine of the *Christian Church*, or believes the Authority of the *Antient Fathers*, or the *Word of God*, as Revealed in the *Scriptures*, cannot deny this Power of the *Priest*; and if the Power of *Absolution* be Indisputable, and it be farther Certain, that God has Entrusted him with the Dispensation of so great a Blessing; the Inference from the Whole is, That Men should use the Means

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which

which God has Appointed, to Ascertain that Blessing to them.

C H A P. VII

The Seventh Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is ; To Receive the Holy Communion.

IT was the Practice of the *Primitive Christians* always to Administer the *Sacrament* to Sick, or Dying Persons. *Paulinus*, in the Life of *St. Ambrose*, affirms, that He received the *Holy Communion* when he was at the Point of Death, and immediately expired. *Simeon Metaphrastes*, in the Life of *St. Chrysostom*, mentions the same thing. One Reason, among others, which induced the *Primitive Christians* to this Practice, was ; That they Judged it Necessary to Conclude the *Christian Life*, with the Highest and most Venerable Instance of *Christian Obedience*.

I have already Discoursed on this Subject in *General*, in the Former Part of this Book ; I shall now consider it more Particularly, as it Relates to Sick Persons, or as it is a Kind of *Spiritual Refreshment* to them, in their Passage to Eternity. And, *First*, I shall consider What is to be Done by the Sick Person, *before* he is admitted to the *Holy Communion*. *Secondly*, In what Manner he ought to Behave himself *at the Time* of Communicating. And, *Thirdly*, What it is Incumbent upon him, *After* he has Refreshed himself with this Heavenly Feast.

As to the *First* of these Particulars ; namely, What is to be Done by the Sick Person *before* he is admitted

to

to the *Holy Communion*, I would Advise him to consider Deeply That Seraphical Exclamation of *Aquinas*: *O Heavenly Banquet*, says he, *in which Our Saviour Himself is Present, by which the Memory of his Passion is Revived in us, Our Minds filled with Divine Grace, and a Pledge of Future Glory is bestowed upon us.* The Great Advantages of Receiving the *Blessed Sacrament*, are set forth in this Passage, in so Lively and Affecting a Manner, that I think I cannot Furnish a Dying Man with more Useful Directions, than by Bestowing some Thoughts upon it. Now the *First* Observation I would make from these words, is; That this Holy Sacrament is represented to us under the Figure of a *Feast*, a Kind of spiritual Entertainment, whereby the Departing Soul is Strengthened and Refreshed in its way to Eternity, after the Fatigues of a Tedious Passage through this World. It is there called, *2dly*, A *Holy Feast*; Because it is not only Holy in its own Nature, the most Holy God being always Spiritually Present in it; but also Because it requires the Utmost Degrees of Holiness, and Christian Perfection, by way of Preparation for it. It is farther added, in the *third* Place, that *Christ Himself is Received* in this Feast. For under the Outward Species of *Bread* and *Wine*, the Great Founder of this Feast, tho' not in a Corporal Manner, is Present; and is received, to our spiritual Advantage, by a Lively and Sincere Faith.

But to consider the *Advantages* of Receiving *Worthily* more Particularly, I go on to make some Reflections on the Remaining Part of the Words; where it is said, *That by Receiving the Holy Communion, the Memory*

of our Saviour's Passion is Revived in Us. For therefore is the *Body and Blood of Christ*, Consecrated under the Elements both of *Bread*, and *Wine*; the Element of *Bread*, representing his *Body* separated from his *Blood*, and the Element of *Wine*, representing to us his *Blood* separated from his *Body*. It was the Design of our Saviour, in this Inconceivable *Mystery*, to Continue a Perpetual Memory of his *Death*, and by a Constant Remembrance of it, to make Men sensible of the Two great *Evils*, both of Sin and Punishment, from which they are delivered, and the great Benefits which, by his Sufferings, they are entitled to. This therefore is the Command of our Blessed Saviour himself, *Do this in remembrance of me*; Luke xxii. 19. And St. Paul, explaining these words of our Lord, assures the *Corinthians*, *That as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come*; 1 Ep. ii. 26. The Sense of which Scripture is, That as often as ye shall approach this Holy *Mystery*, it will Remind you, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* laid down his Life for you, and this Commemoration of his Death and Passion shall continue with you, till his Second Coming to Judge the World, or the Final Consummation of all Things. Our Lord was pleased to Institute this *Sacrament* in Memory of his Sufferings, because he was sensible, that without this visible Representation of them, the Generality of Men would be wholly Unmindful of them. And, 2dly, Because such a Remembrance of Inimitable Inexpressible Love to Mankind, would be the strongest Argument for a Firm Trust and Confidence in him, both in Life and Death. The Inference is Just and Undeniable: If

Christ

Christ laid down his Life for Mankind, we have good Reason to Depend upon his Providence, and to think our selves safe under his Protection.

Another Advantage of this Heavenly Feast is, That it *Fills the Mind with Divine Grace* : For as all Corporal Food does refresh, nourish, strengthen, and exhilarate all the Parts of the *Body* ; and as too much Abstinence does enfeeble and depress the Spirits, and sink the whole Humane Frame into Weakness and Decay ; in the same manner does the Grace of God, which is the Food of the Soul, and the Spiritual Nourishment of it, actuate, enliven, and confirm all the Powers and Faculties of it. The Mind, by this means, is Replenished with a delightful *Remembrance* of all the wonderful Mercies of God, and especially of that Amazing Instance of his Love, the Redemption of Mankind, by the Sufferings of his Son. The *Understanding*, in this Heavenly Banquet, is Feasted and Filled with the largest Measure, not only of Habitual, but also of Actual *Faith* ; which Purifies the Understanding from all Ignorance and Error, and Cleanses the Heart from all the Pollutions of Sin, and Enriches the Mind with the Knowledge of Heaven, and Heavenly Things, thereby creating an Inexpressible Delight to the Soul. To Conclude this Particular : The *Will* of Man, in this Divine Feast, is filled with so Firm a *Hope*, and so Flaming a *Charity* ; the Latter of which alone is the Perfection of all Grace, that it will be Impossible for him, in this State of Life, to receive any farther Communications of it.

Another

166 *The Art of Dying well.*

Another Advantage, *Thirdly*, Of this Heavenly Entertainment, is; That 'tis a *sure Pledge*, to every one who is a *worthy Communicant of Eternal Glory*. This Metaphor of a *Pledge* is taken from a *Custom* among Men; which is, when One Man leaves in the Hands of another, in Cases of *Bargain*, or *Sale*, or *Contract*, or *Promise*, some *Security*, for discharging what he has Promised to perform. Now Our Lord has left his *Body* and *Blood* in the *Sacrament*, as a *Pledge* or *Security* of that Heavenly Beatitude, which he has Promised to those, who Receive it with a Due Preparation of Mind. Whosoever therefore shall receive the *Body* and *Blood* of *Christ* with Purity and Reverence, with Humility and Gratitude, does receive, at the same time, a *Pledge* of Future Happiness. The Spiritual Union of a Departing Soul with *Christ* in Affection and Love, which, in the *Sacrament* of the *Eucharist*, is wonderfully Heighten'd, and Improv'd, is an Earnest of that Communion which it shall always hold with him in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the Sense and Meaning of those words of *St. John*, *Rev. xiv. 13.* *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; that is, Those Persons who are spiritually united to God by *Faith* and *Love* in the Blessed *Sacrament* at the Time of their Death, shall ascend with Him into the Regions of Happiness and Glory.

Thus much may suffice as to the First Particular; namely, What is necessary to be Done by a sick Person before he is Admitted to the *Holy Communion*. I go on Now to consider in what Manner he ought to Behave himself at the Time of Receiving. Now at the

Time

Time of Receiving, when the sacred Elements appear before him, he ought, if his Indisposition will Permit him, to Communicate either in a *Kneeling*, or a *Leaning* Posture; as Expressing, by that Outward *Gesture*, the Inward Lowliness and Humility of the Mind. It is Observable upon this Occasion, that God does many times support Men with sufficient Strength for that purpose. Just before his Receiving, I cannot see how he can employ himself to more Advantage, than by buying his Thoughts in some useful *Meditations*, or Reciting to himself some Devout *Hymn*; of which Kind, there is None seems to me, to carry with it a more Fervent Spirit of Devotion, none in which our *Faith* can be more lively expressed, our *Hope* more effectually Excited, and our Affections more Inflamed; and by Consequence none which is better Adapted to the Condition of a Departing Soul, than the Following *Hymn*, which was made by *Thomas Aquinas*.

*Hail, Sacred Elements ! where God
Supreme, has fix'd his blest Abode.
Here He, who with his Presence, fills
Earth, Heav'n, and Waters, Humbly dwells.
I see, tho' can't Conceive his Pow'r,
Yet what I can't Conceive, Adore.
What Truth has said I must Believe;
The God of Truth cannot Deceive.
When Thou upon the Cross wast slain,
Thy Human Body bore the Pain.
The Godhead then Withdrew, but Here
I see my God again appear.*

In One Confession yet I join;
 Of th' Human Nature and Divine.
 And tho' no Outward Marks appear
 Of Fast'ning Nails, or Pointed Spear,
 Nor am I here allow'd to hide,
 My searching Fingers in thy Side,
 Yet I by Faith thy Presence view;
 Yes I Believe, and Praise Thee too.
 Confirm, in my Approaching Death,
 This Active, and this Lively Faith.
 Excite my Hope, Inflame my Love
 To Men Below, to Thee Above.
 The Holy Robber's Pray'r is Mine;
 This Day in Paradise to Shine.
 In thy sad Sacrifice was seen,
 Of Pain and Death, a Bloody Scene.
 This Bloodless Sacrifice in View,
 Affords me Life, and Pleasure too.
 A Life, the Purest God can give;
 A Life, which Angels only Live.
 With thy Dear Blood, O wash me Clean
 From all the Blemishes of Sin!
 One Drop of which Alone can Free,
 And save a World from Misery.
 O how my Soul, with Eager Hast,
 (Not in the Figures of this Feast)
 For its Enlargement longs, to see,
 In Open View, the Face of Thee!

That

That so, when separate by Death,
It leaves me, with my Parting Breath ;
Without Incumbrance then, and Free,
It may more Closely Join with Thee.

Having recited this Hymn, in the most Devout Manner, and made Confession of his Sins to God ; and having also received Absolution, and the Blessing from the Priest, Let the Sick Person, with all Humility and Reverence, make use of This, or the like Expression ; Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my Roof ; and then, having receiv'd the Holy Communion, let him add, Into thy Hands, O God, I commend my Spirit.

If, after this, his Indisposition will give him leave, let him employ the short Remains of his Life, in a solemn Return of Thanks, for this Adorable Instance of the Transcendent Love of God towards him, in the Benefits whereof he is made Partaker by this Holy Sacrament. It will be farther Necessary for Him ; (the Words being thought to have been Particularly designed for that purpose,) to meditate on that remarkable Passage of our Saviour, mention'd in the Revelations : Behold, I stand at the Door, and knock ; if any one open unto me, I will enter into him, and sup with him, and he with me. Our Blessed Saviour, who Instituted this Sacrament under the Figure of a Feast, desires nothing more Earnestly, than that all Christians should often sup with him at his Table. This is the Sense and Meaning of those words, Behold, I stand at the Door, and knock ; that is, I my self, who am the Founder of this Feast, which is a solemn Commemoration of my own Death,

and Sufferings, and who bestow all the Benefits of spiritual Life, and Nourishment to those who receive it Worthily; I my self Invite you to this Heavenly Banquet, to Feast with me. *If any one open unto me*, that is, if he accepts of my Invitation, and complies with my Desires, in Preparing himself for this Heavenly Entertainment, and shall not, by *Dilatory Excuses*, and *Weak Pretences*, keep off from this Holy Feast; By the Communications of my Grace and Love, *I will enter in to Him, and sup with Him, and He with me.* Now God may Properly be said to *Sup* with us, when he is Delighted with our Spiritual Improvements; and we our selves are no less Delighted in the Farther Communications of his Holy Spirit to us, in this Holy Banquet. The spiritual *Feasting* of the Soul with God, in the Holy Sacrament, occasions the highest Delectation both in God, and in the Soul. God is highly Delighted in observing our Increase in Grace, and Man is highly delighted in receiving such Benefits from Him. The Chief of which Advantages is This; That in this Divine Entertainment, the Soul is spiritually united to God.

This then is the Greatest Happiness of a Departing Soul; this the Highest Comfort and Satisfaction, to have *Christ* himself Spiritually Present in the Holy *Eucharist*; to have the Privilege to Open it self with a Holy Confidence before Him; to Communicate freely to Him the Great Difficulties and Conflicts it labours under, at the Time of its Separation; and not only so, but to Intreat his Mercy and Forgiveness, and Recommend it self into the Hands of God.

C H A P. VIII.

The Eighth Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is ; To consider the Nature, and Prevalency of the Temptation.

UPON the Approach of Death, the Common Adversary of Mankind, *as a Roaring Lion, seeking whom he may Devour*, is Indefatigable in his Attempts to ruin the Souls of Men. Now the *First* Temptation with which he generally exercises them at this Juncture, is ; To try them in their *Faith* ; namely, Whether he cannot persuade them To Renounce, or Disbelieve some Articles of their *Creed*. For as all the Mysteries of the *Christian Faith*, are not only Above the Senses, but also Above the Reason of Mankind ; And as a Divine Faith is the Foundation of Good Works, and consequently of our Justification ; if He succeeds in his Attempts of Undermining, or Overturning this Foundation, the whole Superstructure of Good Works will fall in Course. Now this Temptation of the Spiritual Enemy of Mankind, in our *Last Hours*, is by much the most Grievous, and Difficult to be Overcome ; not only Because we have to deal with an Enemy, who is best Skill'd in all the Subtle Arts of Temptation ; but also Because it has been his Constant Business to Beguile and Deceive Men from the Foundation of the World. It was He who at first Misguided all the Principal *Atheists, Hereticks, and Schismaticks*, that ever were in the World ; many of whom perhaps once were Men of

Great Piety and Learning. St. Paul, convinc'd of the Great Power of the Devil in this Respect, puts us upon our Guard. *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood*, says he, this is, against Men, *but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkeness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places*; that is, against Devils, who are Spirits; and such too, as are very Close and Artful in suiting their Temptations to the Age, and Temper, and Different Constitutions of Men. Dispute and Controversy are not so Powerful Weapons in this Combat with Hell, as is an Active and a Well-grounded Belief, or a Firm Assent to the Will of God, barely upon the Authority of Him who has Revealed it. This is Confirmed by St. Paul in the following Advice: *Above all Things take ye the Shield of Faith, whereby ye shall be Able to quench all the Fiery Darts of the Wicked*; Eph. vi. 16.

But, 2dly, Another Temptation which the Devil makes use of to seduce Men, at the Approach of Death, is by endeavouring to drive them into *Despair*. Now This Temptation is not only Peculiar to Wicked Men; but Good and Well-disposed Persons are Frequently exercised with it. There are Many Reasons, why God is pleased to Permit the Devil to Try the Resolutions of Good Men, This is always done for the more Effectual, and Advantagious Exercise of Many Christian Graces and Virtues; sometimes for the Trial of their Faith, sometimes of their Patience, at others of their Steadiness, and Integrity, and Zeal. Nor is this the Case only of Good Men, that they are subject to Temptations for the Exercise of their Virtue, but 'tis also many times the Condition of wicked Men, for the Punishment

ment of their Vice. When the Devil has persuaded Men to go on in a Habitual Course of Sinning, till the Approach of Death, it is no hard Matter than to persuade them farther, that it is next to an Impossibility to Repent in so short time, as they are like to continue here ; Especially if it be True, what is Generally Believed, that he has Power to lay Open in the Fullest Light, to the Consciences of Men, the Guilt and Heinousness of all their Sins: Besides ; the Usual Hindrances to Consideration and Conviction are then removed, and Things appear with a Different Face to a Dying Person, to what they do to One who is in a State of Health. The Tumult and Business of the World, the Pleasures and Diversions of Life, which before Prevented him from Thinking, or at least Thinking to any Good Purpose, are now so far from giving him any Entertainment, and Satisfaction, that the very Remembrance of them, especially if they were Sinful and Excessive, is full of Gall and Bitterness to him.

But, 3dly, If the Devil does not succeed either in his Temptations to *Infidelity*, or *Despair* ; the next Step he takes, is ; to lead them by degrees from a State of Friendship and Favour with God, into a *Hatred* of Him. The most Generous Principle of all Obedience to God, is the *Love of Him* ; and therefore if the Great Enemy of Mankind can persuade Men, especially in their last Hours, into an Aversion to him ; This is the Master-piece of all the Subtleties of Hell, and ends in the Final Destruction both of Body and Soul. But this Being the Case of very Few, I shall not Enlarge upon it.

C H A P. IX.

The Ninth Rule Preparatory to a Happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is; To have Recourse to such Remedies, for the Resistance of Temptation, as God has prescribed.

IN the Last Chapter, I have considered the Prevalency of those Temptations, which Men are most exposed to, upon their Departure out of this World; and having Discovered the *Diseases*, I shall with more Advantage Proceed now to Prescribe such *Remedies* as are best suited to the Cure of them. The *First* has a Relation to Those who have the Right Use of their Reason, and are Capable of Good Advice; Respecting no way the Case of Those Persons, who are discomposed with Melancholy and Vapours, and will Believe nothing that is said to them. The *Second Remedy* is more General, and relates to the whole Body of Mankind, as being suited to the Necessities of Man, not only in a State of Temptation, but also in all Temporal and Spiritual Exigencies whatsoever.

As to the *First Remedy*; namely, if a Man be any way Tempted to *Infidelity*, or a Disbelief of One, or More of the Articles of the *Christian Faith*; more Particularly that he cannot, by Reason, Account for a *Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead*, or any other Mystery whatsoever; let him consider that all the Mysteries of Christianity, tho' they lay above the Comprehension of Human Reason, yet that it is
highly

highly agreeable to the Principles of Human Reason to Believe them; inasmuch as the Belief of them is supported by the Testimony and Authority of God himself. It is Impossible for Human Reason to Account for the *Manner* of Existence, even of *Created* and *Corporeal Beings* in any One Instance, and yet Human Reason is Convinced at the same time time that they do Exist. Tho' a Man cannot Account by Reason for the *Union* of the *Soul* with the *Body*, or can tell in what manner *One Particle* of the *Body* is United to another; yet no Man is so Weak as to Disbelieve the reality of these *Facts*, tho' they cannot Comprehend them. There is no Proposition in the *Mathematicks* more Certain, than That every Star in the Firmament is Greater than the whole Globe of the Earth, and yet the Greatest Part of Mankind will not Believe This, tho' it be Capable of being Demonstrated by *First Principles*. Now the Force of the Argument lies Here; That if a Human Reason be many times at a loss in the Comprehension of the *Modes* and *Circumstances* of *Material Beings*, it is no Wonder, if it be much more Baffled and Confounded in the Contemplation of Spiritual and Immaterial Objects. The Authority of Divine Revelation, and that Revelation Confirmed by Infinite Miraculous Instances of a Supernatural Power, is a sufficient Foundation for the Belief of all the Mysteries of Christianity.

If the Temptation relates, in a Particular Manner, only to the *Power* of God, and his Inconceivable *Ways* of Acting in the World, so that a Man cannot reconcile to himself the seeming Inconsistencies of them; and

and Therefore that he ought not to Believe them, because he cannot Comprehend them; let him Consider with himself, That 'tis easy to produce an Infinite Variety of Instances in the Works of the *Creation*, of which we can give no Reasonable Account in *what Manner* they were first Created, nor in *what manner* they now Perform their *Operations*, tho' we are fully Convinced of Both. What Finite Understanding can Conceive a Power Able to Create the Universe, and to Raise the whole Frame of Nature out of Nothing? There is not a Star in the Heavens, nor a Flower in the Field, the Beauty and Delicacy of whose Workmanship does not far exceed the Knowledge of the most Capacious Mind. But what shall I say of that Amazing Instance of the Power of God; *The Resurrection of a Human Body*? How is it Possible to Conceive that the Bodies of all Mankind, Moulder'd, it may be, into Dust and Ashes, or Devour'd by Wild Beasts, or Incorporated into Trees, or Plants, or Herbs, shall rise again, at one Awakening Call, with Fresh Additions of Beauty and Comeliness? And yet this Doctrine of the *Resurrection* has been universally held by the *Catholick Church* in all Ages; nor was the Inconceivableness of it ever looked upon as a good Objection against the Truth of it. See with what an Assurance Holy Job, One of the most Antient of the *Inspired Writers*, expresses upon this Occasion: *I know, says he, that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon Earth; and tho', after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see*

for

for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another. Chap. xix. 25, 26, 27.

If a Man be Tempted, in the Next Place, to Despair, or to withdraw his Hope and Confidence from God, by reason of the Number and Greatness of his Sins against Him; the next effectual Remedy against all Temptations of this kind, is the Consideration of God's Infinite Mercies; far exceeding, in the Number and Greatness of Them, all his Transgressions. Mercy is the Beloved Attribute of God, the most Lovely Ornament of the Divinity. It is the most Amiable Perfection of his own Nature, as it is, what he is most Delighted with in others.

The Titles given by Moses to God are, The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful, and Gracious, Forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin. The Royal Psalmist very elegantly expresses the Diffusiveness of God's Goodness to Mankind, where he tells us, That the Lord is Loving unto every Man, and his Mercy is over all his Works; And the Character given of him in the New Testament, which is, That he is Love itself.

But, 2dly, In all Cases of Despondency, the Consideration of the Death and Satisfaction of our Blessed Saviour, is another Prevailing Remedy. For there is no Sin, how Great soever, to which the Benefits of Christ's Satisfaction do not extend, according to that Text of St. John; And he is the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World; 1 Ep. ii. 2. The Reasoning of the Apostle, on this Occasion, is Strong and Conclusive: If God spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not, also with him,

freely give us all Things ? Rom. viii. 32. If ever a Man is Tempted to Doubt of the Mercy of God; will not this Transcendent Instance of it Convince him, how Condescending, how highly Delighted he is to do us Good ? If the Heinousness of his Sins give him no Comfortable Prospect of God's Mercy ; will it not Cheer and Revive his Heart, to Consider with himself, That such a Punishment has been suffered for the Expiation of them, such an ample Satisfaction made, as God himself has been pleased to Accept, and Avowed to be Meritorious for them ? So that now he has nothing to do but with a Penitent Heart, and a Lively Faith to embrace the Mercy which is Purchased for him.

3dly, If a Man be Tempted to a Despair of God's Mercy, by reason of the Greatness and Number of his Sins; let the Consideration of the Necessity of Repentance lead him to a Sense of himself. This is the Prevailing Means which God has been pleased to appoint for the Removal of all that Load of Guilt and Uneasiness which Sin leaves upon the Soul : Come unto me all that Travel, and are heavy Laden, and I will refresh you, says our Blessed Saviour ; Mat. xi. 28. What a Kind Compassionate Invitation to Repentance is Here ? With what Tenderness and Affection does he Beseech Men to Come unto him ? And that he might be sure to win them by such soft Engagements of Love, There is a Promise also, full of the highest Consolation to an afflicted Soul, annexed to their Obedience ; And I will Refresh you. The greatest Pleasures of the Rational Soul, next to Those of Innocence, are the Delights which arise from a sincere Repentance ; nay, in some Respects, they

they are Above them; inasmuch as that Man, who has smarted under the Sense of Guilt, by a long Absence of Religious Pleasure, does more Highly Relish it, than He who has lived in continual Complacencies of Virtue.

But, 4thly, The Remarkable Examples of the Conversion of the Greatest Sinners, is a farther Encouragement for a Religious Trust and Confidence in God. The Case of the *Prodigal Son* seemed to be Desperately Deplorable, even Beyond the Hopes of Mercy, and the Power of Repentance; for his whole Life was one Continued Scene of Luxury, Disobedience, and Pleasure. His Vices were grown Habitual and Confirmed; and he was so far Immerfed in the Things of Flesh and Sense, that there was scarce Room for Conviction; and yet his Repentance at last came up to the Heinousness of his Crimes; And the Mercy of God, in the Forgiveness of them, exceeded his Repentance, and his Sin too. No sooner was the Acknowledgment made; *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, &c.* but he was received into Favour, with all the Expressions of Tenderness and Joy. The next Instance is That of *St. Paul*, who being a Persecutor of the Church of Christ, by the Presenting Grace of God became a Preacher of its Doctrines, and at last Died in the Defence and Confirmation of Them. This is the Argument which He himself makes use of, for a Holy Confidence in God, in his own Case: *This is a Faithful Saying, and Worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners; of whom I am Chief. Howbeit, for this Cause I obtained Mercy, that in me Christ Jesus might shew forth all Long-Suffering, for a Pattern to them, who should hereafter believe on him to eternal Life: 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.*

If the *Case*, in the *Last Place*, be such; That a Man is Tempted to a *Hatred of God*, by throwing off his Allegiance to him; and entering into a Fellowship with the Devil; The Best Advice, on this Occasion, is, to Consider that the Devil is a Deceiver, and that he Imposes upon the Understandings of Men, by giving them False Notions of God, in Representing him as a Cruel, an Implacable, and a Revengeful Being. The Character given of the Devil by our Blessed Saviour, is This; *When he speaketh a Lye, he speaketh of his Own; for he is a Lyar, and the Father of it*: John viii. 44. The First Temptation he made upon Mankind was by a notorious Lye. God had expressely Assured Adam, That if he eat of the Forbidden Fruit, he should surely Dye; The Devil tells him on the Contrary, That if he eat of it, he should surely Live. Thus it is, that he still continues to Deceive Men; Either by Representing such and such Actions not to be sinful, which really are so; or else by Representing them less sinful than they are; and this He does, either by Blinding the Minds of Men by Partiality and Prepossession, or by Dressing up those Actions in the Appearances of *Virtue* and *Holiness*; By Disguising and Covering them over with the Prospect of *Pleasure*, or *Profit*, or Recommending under the Specious Titles of *Greatness* and *Honour*; Temptations, such as the most stiddy Virtue is hardly Proof against, and by which the most Heroick Examples of Goodness have been foiled, and overcome.

Now in all Temptations of this Kind, the most Effectual Remedy for a Man, is; To be Cautious and always upon his Guard; To look farther than Outward Shew, and Appearance, and to search beforehand into the

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the *Nature*, and *Circumstances*, and *Consequences* of his own *Actions*. Common Experience will convince him, that all the *Promises* which the Devil ever made him were *Fallacious*; a *Delusion* either upon his *Senses*, or his *Understanding*; And that whatsoever seeming *Pleasure* or *Advantage* they carry'd with them at present, they were generally followed with the *Stings* and *Lashes* of his own *Guilty Mind*.

I proceed now to consider the *Second Remedy* which God has prescribed against all *Temptation*; and which indeed is more *General*, tho' not less *Efficacious*, as it *Extends* it self not only to all the *Temporal*, but also to all the *Spiritual Wants* and *Exigencies* of *Men*; and that is, the *Exercise* of *Prayer* and *Devotion*, viz. Whether a *Man*, in the time of his *Indisposition*, shall address himself in *secret Prayer* to *God*; or whether he be assisted with the *Joint Petitions* of his *Minister*, and other *Devout Persons*. The *Effectual Fervent Prayer* of a *Righteous Man*, the *Apostle* tells us, *availeth much*. If the Devil acted with an *irresistible Prevalency* in his *Temptations* upon *Mankind*, it would be of little *Significancy* to *Apply* to *Heaven* for *Grace* and *Strength* to *subdue* them; but as he acts only by a *Permission* from *God*, and not with any *Compulsive Influence* on the *Minds* of *Men*; this *Permission* may be *suspended* by that *Power*, upon a *Devout Application* to Him. *St. Austin*, in his *Exposition* of those words in the 35th Psalm, *Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation*, does plainly illustrate this *Truth*; but more *Particularly*, and more *Fully* in the *Case* of *Holy Job*: The *Devil*, says he, *has no Power over Men, but what he receives from the Fountain of all Power*. He had indeed a *Power* to *Envy* this

Patient

Patient Man, but he had no Power to Hurt him. He might Accuse him, but he could not Condemn him. He had no Power to Injure him ev'n in a Hair of his Head, but by God's Permission. Nay, he could not so much as Tempt him, till he requested that Liberty from God; Forth thy Hand now; that is, Do Thou withdraw thy Providence from him, and leave him to my Power, and he will curse thee to thy Face. The Permission was granted: The One Tempts, the Other is Tempted. He that was Tempted, conquered, the Tempter was overcome: For tho' God permitted the Devil to deprive him of all his Substance, yet he did not entirely Forsake him, but Fortified the Mind of his Faithful Servant with sufficient Strength to subdue his Temptations. O the Prevalency of Divine Grace! Man who was conquered in Paradise, conquers upon a Dunghil; There he was Overcome by the Devil, at the Persuasion of the Woman; Here he overcomes the Devil, and the Woman also.

I cannot Finish this Chapter, without a Just Complaint against Those, who only pay a mere Formal Customary Visit to sick Persons, without any Intention of joining in Prayer with them. Such an Unseasonable Civility as This is as little Beneficial to our selves, as it is to them; nay, many times it is a great Hinderance to them in their Preparations for Eternity; Inasmuch as it engages them in useles and unprofitable Discourse. Whereas the Religious End and Design of Visiting the Sick, is either to Assist them with our Advice, or with our Prayers; or else to Imprint the Consideration of Theirs and our Own Mortality more Deeply upon our selves: For as the Prayers of Good Men are Effectual with God, and as the Devil is Indefatigable in his Temptations

tations at our latter End ; these are strong Obligations upon Men, to Exert themselves with the utmost Fervency of Devotion, in favour of a Departing Soul,

CHAP. X.

The Tenth Rule Preparatory to a happy Death, upon the Approach of it, is ; To Consider the Uncertainty of Human Life.

IN the Preceeding Chapters, I have Adapted my Rules for Dying well to those Persons, who are not snatched away at once, but go off the Stage of this World by a Leisureable Decay of Nature: I Proceed now to Consider the Case of those Men, who tho' they may have no Lingerin Distemper upon them, and who, it may be, are at present in a very good State of Health, yet, as to all Human Appearance, may be in as much Danger of Dying, as those who are visited with any Dangerous Illness. Now this may Properly be esteemed the Case of Three Sorts of Men : For, in the *First Place*, there are some Men to whom Death is *Near, Unforeseen*, and yet very *Certain* ; This is the Case of those Persons who are seized with an *Apo-plexy*, or struck with *Lightning* from Heaven. There are Others again, to whom Death is seemingly very *Near*, not altogether *Unforeseen*, or *Certain*, but yet very *Probable* ; and this is the Case Particularly of those who are Concerned in *Military Employments*, and of those who are in Continual Danger at *Sea*. There are Others,

Others, *Lastly*, to whom Death is very *Near*, not *Unforeseen*, nor *Uncertain*; and This is the Case of those who lay under a *Legal Sentence*, in order for *Execution*.

As to the Case of Those Persons to whom Death is *Near*, *Unforeseen*, and yet very *Certain*; a very strict Severity of Life, and a Constant, or rather a Continual Remembrance of Death is highly Necessary. It is the Highest Instance of Human Prudence, much more of Religious Wisdom, to Provide against the worst that may befall a Man; but much more so, when any Neglect or Omission in that Case is of the worst Consequence to him. Now there is no Instance can be given, in the whole Compass of Religion, wherein he exposes himself to greater Dangers, and greater Punishments, than in his Unpreparedness for his last Hour. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day, nor the Hour, when the Son of Man cometh*, ought to be a Constant Lecture of Mortality to these Men; "O seemingly Grievous," but really Valuable Necessity, where I am so strictly "obliged to pursue what is Best, what is most Reasonable, what is most Profitable for me! If God had "commanded me to undergo all the sad Scene of Misery and Persecution which the *Primitive Martyrs* "suffered, ought I not to have bore it with Bravery and "Resolution? Does not even Persecution it self look "Lovely, and even Death it self Desirable to a Religiously Composed Mind? Why then shall I complain, when I am not commanded to expose my self "to Danger, but to Provide only for my own Safety? "The Pleasing Command is *Watch: Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give* "Thee

“ *thee Light.* Thou wilt Reply perhaps, That to Dye
 “ thus suddenly is only the Case of a very Few ; A-
 “ low ’tis true, yet how canst thou assure thy self,
 “ that Thou thy self art not of the Number of those
 “ Few ? If this at last should be thy sad Condition,
 “ what Satisfaction will it Then be to Consider, that
 “ Numbers have escaped the same Punishment ? Thou
 “ art now Forewarned of the surprizing Summons,
 “ Repeat the Awakening Call ; *Watch, for thou knowest*
 “ *neither the Day, nor the Hour, when the Son of Man*
 “ *cometh.*

But, 2dly, As to the Case of those Persons, who are concerned in a *Military Employment*, there are other Rules which are better adapted to the Different Circumstances of these Men. The *First* is, That they would enquire whether the War they engage in be Justifiable or not : For altho’ War in its own Nature, and in the General Notion of it, be no ways Unlawful ; yet if it be undertaken upon any unjustifiable *Motives*, or carried on by Unwarrantable *Means*, or Directed it to Bad *Ends*, it is certain that no Man can engage himself in it without Sin. If he is forced into the *Service*, by the Will and Pleasure of his *Prince*, let him be Convinced at least that the War he is engaged in is not *unlawful*. For thus it is, That St. *Austin*, in his Book against *Faustus the Manichee*, decides this Case : *The Prince and the Soldier*, says he, *lay under Different Convictions as to the Lawfulness of War : The One ought to be Convinc’d, that the War he engages in be Lawful ; the Other, That it is not Unlawful.* But, 2dly, It is Necessary that Those who are concerned in any *Military Employment*, should

Observe those Directions given by them by *John the Baptist*, who being asked by the *Soldiers*, *What they should do to be saved?* were answered, *Do Violence to no Man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your Wages*; Luke iii. 14. The Last Advice to these Persons is, that they would Fortify Themselves with their own Innocence, that so they might be Able, with the same Courage, to Face an Eternal Death, as they are a Temporal One; and to Fight, with equal Bravery, against the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*, as they would against any Secular Power whatsoever.

These Rules are no less Applicable to the Case of those Persons who are in Continual Danger at *Sea*; and do as expressly Condemn all *Unlawful Engagements*, all *Pyratical Depredations*, as they Require an Even and Constant Course of Holy Living.

But, *Lastly*, The Case of Persons under the Sentence of the Law for Capital Crimes, is, in some Respects, far Different from the Case of the Persons Above-mentioned; For it is Unquestionably Certain, that these Men for the most part suffer Justly; if they suffer Justly, they have all the Reason in the World to make the Best Use of that short time they have to live in the World, in their Preparations for Eternity. The most Effectual way to do This, is, to Consider, *First*, The Nature of the Crime they have been Guilty of; whether it be *Theft*, *Treason*, *Adultery*, *Murder*, or the like. *Secondly*, To Reflect with themselves, That every *Publick Vice* carries with it a Deeper Dye than such Sins as are of a *Private Nature*, as giving Greater Offence to others, and as Being a Breach of that Order
and

and Government, by which alone whole Kingdoms and Communities of Men are Supported and Maintained. *Thirdly*, They ought to enquire; Whether they have not Drawn others into the Commission of the same Sin, and by that Means have been Instrumental to their Death also; and in this Case a very Solemn and Extraordinary Repentance is required of them. But then, *Lastly*, This Repentance will be no ways Acceptable to God, unless also they make Reparation, as far as they are Able, for the Injuries they have done to others, and especially to That Society or Government of which they are Members. But in all Cases of this Nature, it will be Necessary to have Recourse to the Advice and Directions of Those, whose Profession enables them, to give more Particular Instructions, according to the *Nature and Circumstances* of the Fact committed.

C H A P. XI.

A Practical Consideration of the Happy Death of Good Men.

I Have now gone thro' all the Rules Preparatory to a Happy Death, I proposed to speak of; and shall Proceed to Consider, by way of Application, the Great Advantages of Dying well. Now altho' it is a Matter of no great Difficulty for any Man, Provided he is but willing, to Prepare himself for Death, yet it is a Business of the Highest Importance to him, and even in this World, affords him the Greatest Satisfaction of Mind; In the *First Place*, That his Whole Conversation has been Innocent and Conscientious with Respect

to Himself; and, *Secondly*, That it has been Exemplary and Useful with Regard to others.

I would Observe, in the *first* Place, That an Innocent Conversation refreshes the Minds of Good Men with a Peculiar Alacrity, not only in all the Difficulties and Afflictions of Life, but does also Enliven them with an Uncommon Chearfulness at the Hour of Death. There is a Great Difference between all Spiritual and Sensual Pleasures; the latter of which we have scarce any Relish of, when the Body is oppressed with Pain and Weakness; whereas the Pleasures of Religion do at that Juncture affect the Soul in a more sensible manner; and amongst all the Pleasures of Religion, none so much as a sober Reflection upon a Man's own Innocence and Integrity.

When a Departing Good Man surveys all the Different Stages of his past Life, and beholds a Regular and Uniform Course of Piety and Obedience, how does he applaud himself in the Delightful Prospect, and Congratulate himself that he is now almost out of Danger, and Beyond the reach of Temptation? "I feel, says he, "amidst all these Pains and Terrors of Death, such Overflowings of Delight, such Exultations of Conscience as are a Kind of Foretaste of those Joys I am entering upon. O the sweet Remembrance of those "Difficulties I have Conquered, of those Afflictions I "have bore with Patience, of that Fortitude wherewith I bravely Encountered, wherewith I Triumphed "over my Spiritual Enemies, *This is my Rejoicing,* "with St. Paul, the Testimony of my Conscience, that in "Simplicity and Godly Sincerity I have had my Conversation in the World. I have fought a good Fight, I "have

“ have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; Hence-
 “ forth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness;
 “ i. e. I have Lived righteously, I shall Dye peaceably,
 “ I shall Reign triumphantly in Heaven.

But then, 2dly, There is another Reflection which affords a Good Man the Greatest Satisfaction at the time of his Death; and that is, That he has been Exemplary, and Beneficial to Mankind. The Greatest Pleasure of a Good Man's Conscience, next to the Consideration of his own Innocence, is; That by a visible Piety, and a shining Conversation, he has in some Sense Communicated his Virtue to others. It is the Nature of Goodness to Spread and Diffuse it self; and the Pious Christian cannot be Content to be Religious himself, but endeavours to make others Religious also. He sets the Fair Example which they Transcribe, and Reflects with the same Complacencies on Their Virtues, as they do Themselves. But Then, when to the Consideration of an Exemplary Piety, he adds the Delightful Reflection of his Beneficence to Mankind, his Joys rise in Proportion to his Charity, and he Feasts himself with those Benefactions he has bestowed on others. Those Comforts and Delights which he gave to the Afflicted Part of Men, do now spring up in his own Bosom, and he Triumphs in being so like his Heavenly Father, whose Character it is, That he is Good, and does Good: *Because I delivered the Poor that cryed, says he, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help; Because I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet was I to the Lame; and made the Widow's Heart to sing for Joy: Therefore says he, the Blessing of him that was ready to Perish is now come upon me: Job xxix. 15, 16, 17.*

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But then, 2dly, Besides that Peace of Conscience which revives and supports a Dying Man, there is also a far Greater Happiness then in view, which, in all the Agonies of his Distemper, supports him with a Holy Courage, and that is the Prospect of Immortality.

There is no Proposition in *Philosophy* more Certain than this, *He that Dies well, Dies happily*. It is no less Certain, on the other hand, *That an Unhappy Death is the Natural Consequence of a Wicked Life*; and that 'tis Morally Impossible it should be otherwise. The only Difference in the Death of Good and Bad Men, is This; that the One passes out of a Mortal and Miserable Life, into a State of Happiness and Immortality; the Other, out of a Short, a Perishing, and Comparatively Happy Life, to a Life of Endless Pain and Torment; and which indeed may more Properly be called an Eternal Death; for wicked Men shall then be entirely Dead to all *Sensation* of Delight and Pleasure, and Alive only to a sad Perception of Misery and Punishment.

This Discrimination of the State of Good and Bad Men in another Life, is fully attested in the Holy Writings: *I heard a Voice from Heaven, says St. John, saying unto me, Write; Blessed are the Dead which Die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them: Rev. xiv. 13.* There are some *Interpreters*, who are of Opinion, that these words relate only to those who suffer *Martyrdom*; but they are more Generally, and with more Truth, applyed to All those who Die in a State of Grace and Favour with God. *St. Bernard*, in one of his

his *Epistles* concerning the *Macchabees*, confirms this Exposition of them: "Blessed are the Dead, says he, which die in the Lord; not only those who die for the Lord, as the Martyrs, but also those who die in the Lord, as the Confessors. There are two Considerations which Recommend Death to us; an Exemplary Life, and a Good Cause; the Cause of Dying in Defence of Religion rather than a Holy Life. How Lovely therefore, how Valuable must such a Death appear to us, which is Recommended both by an Exemplary Life, and a Good Cause?" It is for this Reason that the *Church*, which is the Best Interpreter of *Scripture*, enjoins, That this Passage be always used in the *Service* for the *Burial of the Dead*. *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; that is, Blessed are all those who, at the time of Death, are united to God in Heart, and Affection, as Lively Members of the Head, which is *Christ*. Thus it is said of *St. Stephen*, *That he fell asleep in the Lord*; that is, that he was united in Spirit and Love to him, as the Members are joined to the Head.

Wherein this Blessedness does more Peculiarly Consist, *St. John* proceeds to Explain in the words following: *Even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their Labours*. The Holy Spirit of Truth, which cannot Deceive Men, assures them, that Death puts an end to all the Toils, Fatigues, and Difficulties of Good Men, and that then commences an universal Cessation from all Labour; and not only so, but an Eternal *Sabbath* Rises upon them; a Life Abounding with the Fullness of Joy they are now entering upon; *For their Works follow them*. Tho' all their Good Actions are past and gone,

gone, yet they still continue in the Blessed Effects, and Consequences of them, and they shall receive the Rewards of them in a Future State. The Royal Prophet, Describing the Character and the Reward of the Righteous Man, does thus express himself, *He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the Poor, and his Righteousness remaineth for ever*; Psal. cxii. 9. The Money indeed, which was the Instrument of his Bounty, he leaves behind him; but his Charity, his Beneficence, his Compassion, which moved him to a Generous Assistance of his Poor Brethren, attend him in their Rewards into another World, and enrich him with such an Affluence of Happiness and Pleasure, as will continue always. But not only the Works of Charity, but also all Works of Faith, of Hope, of Fear; all Works of Temperance, of Chastity, of Resignation, of Courage: In short, all Works of Piety whatsoever will then follow him into the Regions of the Blessed.

C H A P. XII.

A Practical Consideration of the Unhappy Death of Wicked Men.

OUR Saviour says of Judas the Traitor, *That it had been good for him, if he had never been born.* It is Impossible to Describe the Unhappiness of that Man, who does not Pursue, and Attain that End, for which God Originally created him. For all other Creatures, whether *Brutes, or Plants, or Inanimate Beings*, if they do not arrive to that Perfection, but which by
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the Laws of Nature they might have attained to, they suffer no Punishment thereby upon the Dissolution of their Beings. But Man, who was formed for the Highest Happiness, Inferiour only in Degree to the Happiness of God himself, if he Deviates from his Chief and Ultimate End, does not Cease to Be, but lives a Life much more Intolerable than Death it self; inasmuch as it is far Better, not to Be at all, than to be Miserable for ever. The Consequence therefore is undeniable; That 'tis the Highest Instance of Folly, for any Man not to Prosecute his Chief Happiness; since this is the Great *Dilemma* of every Man Living, either to be eternally Happy, or Miserable.

Now to give some Useful Instructions in a Matter of such Importance, it will not be Improper, in my Opinion, to enlarge something on Those Words of St. Paul: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. *For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory. While we look not at the Things, that are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; For the Things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal.* This Sublime Expression, these Apostolical Words, to any Man who has a Spiritual Relish of Heaven and Heavenly Things, are Obvious and Plain; to those who are wholly immerled in Flesh and Sense, and whose Spiritual Appetites are Depraved, they are only Dreams, and Fancies, and Unintelligible Notions of Nothing.

The Man of a Spiritual Taste, and Heavenly Contemplation, infers from these words; That the Afflictions he suffers, and the Difficulties he struggles with

in this Life, are but Light, and Short, tho' they should Continue for many Years; and that those Difficulties and Afflictions are so Acceptable to God, that they will Purchase for him an Inexhaustible Treasure of Happiness and Glory. The Inference he draws from Hence is ; That he ought not to avoid Afflictions or Persecutions by any sinful Compliances, or Prefer his Temporal Advantage to his Expectations of Eternity ; and from hence, like a Divine Philosopher, he argues farther ; That a Good Life is the only Means of securing his Chief Happiness, and that the only way to Live unto God, is to Die to the World. But that Man, on the other hand, who has Gross and Carnal Notions of Things, and who will scarce Believe any Thing, but what he can *Taste*, or *See*, inverts the Order of the *Apostles* Words, and will tell you, That he ought to Repel Force by Force ; that the Principles of Justice, and Self-Preservation oblige him to Defend himself against any Injury and Injustice whatsoever ; That none but Men of Base and Servile Principles will submit to such Severities ; and for these Reasons, that 'tis Lawful to Right himself ; tho' it be by Lying, Cheating, Murder, Breaking of God's Commandments, or any other unwarrantable Means whatsoever. This is the Common Language of this Sort of Men ; *Why do ye Preach to me about Things that are Invisible ? My Understanding is Free and Open, and it shall never be fettered, or puzzled, or blinded with Mystery and Revelation. I neither see nor feel the Torments of the Damned, any more than I do the Happiness of the Blessed. But will you have the Hardiness to Deny what I see with my Eyes, and am convinced* of

of at my Fingers Ends? Will you have the Confidence to tell me, tho' I experimentally feel it, that there is nothing Grievous in Poverty and Sufferings? This is not only the Opinion, but many times the Discourse of those Men, who are quite sunk in Earth and Flesh.

Now what I would Observe, in the 1st Place, from these words, is; The great Humility of the *Apostle*, in his Extenuation of the great Difficulties he underwent for the sake of *Christ*; and his Thankfulness expressed in a Just Acknowledgment of the Largeness of the Reward he shall receive for them. *Our light Affliction*, says he, *which is but for a Moment*, &c. "There is no Comparison between the Persecutions I suffer, and the Compensation which will be made me." And yet 'tis very Certain, that *St. Paul* laboured very hard, and passed thro' the severest Afflictions in the Exercise of his Ministerial Office, for near Forty Years. For in the History of *St. Stephen's* Martyrdom, we read, That those who stoned him, laid down their Clothes at a young Man's Feet, whose Name was Saul; *Acts vii. 58.* In his *Epistle to Philemon*, it is Evident, that he continued in his Obedience to *Christ*, even to Old Age; *ver. 9.* So that the Best Part of his Youth, his whole Middle Age, and some time of his Old Age were employed in the Service of his Lord and Master; and yet Behold the Lowliness of the *Apostle*! All the Afflicting Scene of Misery and Persecution which he pass'd thro, from his Conversion to his Martyrdom, was but Light, and for a Moment. And this Assertion, Comparatively speaking, is True; tho' *St. Paul's* Sufferings, if Considered by *Themselves*, as to the Time of them, were of a long Continuance,

But then, 2dly, The Great Humility of the *Apostle* appears farther, in affirming that his Afflictions were not only Momentary as to their Continuance, but that they were Light also, as to the Measures and Degrees of them; whereas, in reality, there never was any One, our Blessed Saviour excepted, who underwent a Larger Share of Misery and Persecution. In the Account given by himself of his own Sufferings, speaking of himself in Conjunction with his Brethren, he thus expresses himself: *Even unto this present Hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain Dwelling-Place; and labour, working with our own Hands: Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the Filth of the World, and are the Off-scouring of all Things unto this Day: 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13.* In another Place he is more Particular in the Description of his Sufferings: *In Labours more Abundant, in Stripes above Measure, in Prisons more Frequent, in Deaths often, Of the Jews five times received I Forty Stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with Rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered Shipwreck; a Night and a Day I have been in the Deep. In Journeying often; in Perils of Waters, in Perils of Robbers, in Perils by my own Countrymen, in Perils by the Heathen, in Perils in the City, in Perils in the Wilderness, in Perils in the Sea, in Perils among false Brethren. In Weariness and Painfulness, in Watching, often, in Hunger and Thirst, in Fastings often, in Cold and Nakedness: 2 Cor. xiii. 24, 25, 26, 27.* These are the Afflictions which St. Paul calls Light and Easy; and which tho' very Sharp and Pungent in Themselves, yet the Consideration of the Reward, and the Great Love

Love he had for his *Master*, made them not only Tolerable, but Delightful too.

But, 3dly, The next Thing Observable from the words, is the Greatness of the Reward; *A far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory*. There is something in this Scripture, which can better be Conceived, than Expressed; an Infinite Abundant Inconceivable Measure of Divine Happiness. The *Apostle*, in Condescension to the Capacities of Men, Compares the Rewards of Eternity by the Similitude of Material Being vastly extended; For every Material Being is then said to be Large, and Excessive in its Quantity, when it is Considerable in its Height, and Length, Bulky, Spacious, and consequently Heavy, and of great Weight; so that this Phrase, *A Far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory*, does imply, in the 1st Place, The most sublime Station of Honour, surpassing, in its Eminency, all the inferior Posts of Dignity and Preferment in the World; it denotes also the Unmeasurably Long Duration of this Honour, in Comparison of which every other Duration is of a short Date; and, *Lastly*, it is not only Infinite in its Duration, nor is it a Fleeting Airy, Notional Pleasure; but 'tis a Rational, a Manly, a Solid, and Substantial Joy; it is, as *St. Paul* expresses it, not only *a Weight*, but *a Weight of Glory*. The word *Glory* is a Term of Art in *Painting*, and as it is here Applied to the Happiness of the Blessed; it signifies the Amazing Brightness and Splendor, in which Men shall shine in their Glorified Bodies in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But because a sensual Appetite has no Taste of these Heavenly Satisfactions, inasmuch they are spiritually Discerned,

cerned. *St. Paul* proceeds, in the words following, to point out the great Difference there is in a *sensual* and a *spiritual* Life, and to shew the Contrariety between them. The Appetites and Inclinations of worldly Men lead them into a surprizing Eagerness for such Things as are *Before them*, and *look only at the Things which are seen*; whereas the spiritually-minded Man, raises his Prospect higher; Believes, Contemplates, and Thirsts after more sublime Pleasures, and *looks at the Things which are not seen*. The *Objects* which these Men fix their Affections upon, the *Ends* they propose to themselves, and the *Means* whereby they pursue those *Ends*, are also widely Different. The sublime *Objects* which a spiritual Mind entertains it self with, are the Contemplation of God, the Prospect of Immortality; the Pleasures it mostly Delights in, are those of Purity, of Innocence, and Devotion. The *Objects*, on the other hand, which the sensual Man is mostly enamoured with, are Gross and Carnal; and, indeed such, as even the Brutes, in some Instances of them, enjoy in a much Higher Degree, than he does himself. The Pleasures of the Former are Durable, and Lasting, always Fresh and Satisfactory, and never satiate in the Enjoyment of them; whereas the Gratifications of the sensual Man end in Loathsomeness and Surfeit, and always expire with the *Objects* of them. And as the *Objects* which the Spiritual and Sensual Man fix their Affections upon are widely Different, so are also the *Ends*, which they each Propose to themselves. For the sensual Man looks no farther than this World; all his Prospects, Hopes, and Expectations terminate within the Compass of this Temporary Life; *Let us eat and drink, for*

to-morrow we die, is the only *Maxim* he governs himself by ; whereas the Chief Happiness the spiritual Man proposes to Himself, is not only to Please himself, but also to Please God ; not to Indulge his Appetites, but to Restrain them, not to make the Earth the Center of his Wishes, but to Enlarge his Views, and aspire after that Supreme Happiness, which alone can satisfy the Desires of an Immortal Soul. Nor are the Means which these Men make use of for the Attainment of these Ends less Different, than are the *Ends* themselves. The sensual Man supports himself in his Lust and Intemperance, by Extravagance and Excess, by a great Profusion of Time and Health, many times by Lying, by Flattery, and Injustice ; whereas the spiritual Man pursues his *End* by such *Means*, are Safe, Honourable, and Religious ; such as are equally Agreeable to his Constitution and his Happiness, neither Derogatory to his Reputation, nor Inconsistent with his Interest, but ever calculated to the Service of God, and the Peace of his own Mind.

This then is the Only and True Reason why so Few understand *The Art of Dying well*, that they do not Contemplate, or at least seriously Contemplate the Things that are Invisible and Eternal, but their Hearts and Affections are wholly fixed upon Temporal Enjoyments, and their Thoughts taken up in the Consideration only of the Advantage, or Pleasure, or Beauty of the Things of Sense ; so that the only Difference between a sensual Man and a Beast is This ; That the Reason why Brutes look no farther than such Objects as are visible to them, is ; that they are not endowed with Reason,

Reason, (which alone exercises it self in the Contemplation of Heaven and Heavenly Things) and therefore cannot have any Prospect or Notion of them. The sensual Man, on the other hand, tho' capable of Exercising both his Reason and his Faith, *will not Behold the Glories of the Invisible State, and the Reversions of Futurity, but Thinks only of what is Pleasant and Agreeable at Present.*

There is no Thought which will more effectually rouse Men from this Lethargy of Flesh and Sense, than the Consideration of *the State of the Damned.* Those Unhappy Spirits are at last Convinced with Terror, and with Judgment (tho' it is now too late to consider it) That all the Temporal Glory of this World, the Riches, the Honours, the Pleasures of this Transitory Life are past and gone, and That they are now Dreadfully succeeded by an Eternity of Torment. They see and feel the Miserable Exchange they have made; an Immortal Spirit Damned, for a Short-lived Pleasure. Crowns, and Scepters, and Kingdoms lost; only to gratify a Brutish Lust, or an Unreasonable Passion. The *Wise Man*, with great Eloquence, describes the Language of these Men; which, tho' of no Advantage to them, yet to us they are a useful Lecture of Morality, and the Application of them may be of considerable Service to us: *We have erred from the way of Faith, say they, and the Light of Righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the Sun of Righteousness rose not upon us. We wearied our selves in the way of Wickedness and Destruction: The way of the Lord we have not known it. What hath Pride profited us? Or what Good have Riches without*

with our Haunting brought us? All those things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasted by; and as a Ship that passeth over the Waves of the Water, which, when it is gone by, the Trace thereof cannot be found; neither the Path-way of the Keel in the Waves; or, as when a Bird hath flown thro' the Air, there is no Token of her way to be found; but the light Air being beaten with the Stroke of her Wings, and parted with the violent Noise and Motion of them, is passed thro, and therein afterwards no Sign where she went, is to be found. Wisdom v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. In these words it is Obvious to Observe; That the sensual Man, in a Future State, will Condemn himself, in the 1st Place, That by persuing with Eagerness the Uncertain Pleasures of this World, he has forfeited his Title to more Durable and Lasting Delights. 2^{dly}, That he is wholly Uncapable for ever to Recover his lost Happiness. And, 3^{dly}, That the Remembrance of his Imprudence, in this Respect, will be a Part of his Punishment to all Ages. Nay; if a Man considers only the Present State and Order of Things, he will find that the spiritually-minded Man, does not only enjoy his Share of Temporal Felicity, with more Satisfaction, and a better Taste, but does really find more Pleasure in the Contempt, or Loss of all worldly Pleasures, than the sensual Man does in the Enjoyment of them.

It may with great Reason be affirmed, in the 1st Place, that the spiritually-minded Man enjoys his Share of Temporal Felicity with more Satisfaction, and a Better Taste, than the sensual Man. For Experience will convince any Man, that a Life of Intemperance and Excessive Pleasure does not only fill the Body with gross

Humours, but does also clog and incumber the Spirits, and by that means Unqualifies them for an Agreeable Sensation of those Delights, which are Peculiar to him as a Man. There is a Regular State of Health, and a True Disposition of the *Sensitive Powers*, which are always look'd upon as necessary for a True Perception of all sensual Pleasure. Now that Man enjoys these Qualifications in the Highest Degree, who governs himself by the Rules of Temperance, and keeps the Body in due Subjection to the Soul; for his Moderation prevents all that Surfeiting and Loathsomness which usually follow a Luxurious way of Life; and Instructs him farther, that *To use this World, so as not to abuse it*, is the Only Pleasure both of a Wise Man, and a Christian.

But, 2dly, The spiritually-minded Man does really perceive more Pleasure in the Contempt, or Loss, or Want of all Temporal Felicity, than the sensual Man does in the Enjoyment of it. This indeed, at first sight, looks like a Paradox, and might, with some Reason, be thought so, had it not been frequently confirmed by the Assurances of Pious and Good Men. See with what a holy Triumph St. Paul rejoices in the midst of all his Wants and Sufferings: *I am Fill'd with Comfort*, says he, *I am Exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation*; 2 Cor. vii. 4. This Joy of the Apostle was Spiritual and Divine, as much above all Sensual Delights, as the Soul is of a Finer Make and Constitution than the Body. St. *Athanasius*, in the Life of St. *Anthony*, relates of Him, *That he never seem'd the least to be Concern'd at the Loss of all that he had*. This Observation is no less True of all the *Primitive* Christians, and of all Good Men whatsoever; who tho' they live in a Continual

tinual State of Want, and exercise themselves in the *Passive* and most Afflicting Duties of Religion, yet by Raising their Thoughts and Expectations above the World, and Fortifying themselves with a Sense of their own Innocence, they dare bid Defiance even to Danger and Death. This therefore is worthy the Consideration of every Good Christian, That whosoever shall use any Unjust Means either to Procure, or Keep, or Increase his *Things Temporal*, shall, by so doing, not only forfeit his Right to the *Things Eternal*, but also will lose that Delight and Comfort with which a spiritual Life does continually abound.

Consider therefore, O Man! whosoever Thou art, That Thou art now, it may be, in a full Enjoyment of Health; Is it not therefore more Reasonable, is it not also more Religious to employ that Time in the Service of God, wherein thy Passions are Generally most Warm, thy Affections most Immoderate, and the Temptations of Sense have the strongest Influence upon Thee? Where's the Virtue of Forgiving an Enemy, when thou hast not Strength to Resist him? Where's thy Goodness in withdrawing thy Affections from the World, when Thou art going out of it? Where's thy Courage in Resisting Temptations, when Thou hast no Relish of them? Reflect with thy self, that those Duties are more Acceptable to God, and more Available to thy Salvation, which are Free and Voluntary, than such as proceed from Necessity and Compulsion; These are generally the Effects only of a servile Fear, and are performed more out of a Principle of Interest to thy self, than any Principle of Love and Obedience to God. Look back to the Great Examples of Antient

Times, and see before thee the Devout Patterns of the Present Age, and Learn to be Wise betimes. If thy Friend should advise thee in thy Journey, that thou art out of thy way, and that the Path thou hast taken would lead to a Precipice, or an Ambuscade; with what Thankfulness wouldst thou receive his Counsel, and Return with Speed into the Right way? Is not thy Soul Preferable to thy Body? The Care therefore of thy Soul ought to rise in Proportion to the Value of it, and the great Danger it is in of being Lost for ever.

But to Represent the Death of Wicked Men with more Advantage to the Living, these Three Considerations will be of Great Service. The 1st is, That the Death of the sensual Man is made very Uncomfortable, by the sad Remembrance of his Past Pleasures, 2^{dly}, That it is made more Uncomfortable by the Gall-ing Reflections of his own Conscience: As it is, in the 3^d and Last Place, most of all Imbittered with the Dis-mal Apprehensions of a Future State.

The Death of the Sensual Man, in the 1st Place, is made very Uncomfortable by the sad Remembrance of his Past Pleasures. Those Delights, which lately afforded him the Highest Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of them, do now afford him the most Grievous Reflection, that he can enjoy them no more. He reco-lects with Pain his former Enjoyment, and it is now a Part of his Misery what he once esteemed his Greatest Happiness. As the World, for some time, has engrossed his Thoughts, and the whole Stream of his Affections has run in the same Channel, it is Now almost impossible to Divert their Course, so that his Inclinations to Pleasure do still continue, tho' his want of Health

Health does wholly Unqualify him for the Sensation of it. Unhappy Man that he is! Obligated to Covet what he cant Enjoy; and which, if he could Enjoy, would only enhance his Future Punishment. To see Happiness, and not to Enjoy it, is One Ingredient of the Misery of the Damned. The Case of the Sensual Man is much the same with that of *Dives*; *He seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom*; but *there is a great Gulph fixed*; his Indisposition intercepts the Pleasure, and his Wishes only Reach to the Enjoyment.

But, 2dly, The Death of the Sensual Man is made more Uncomfortable, by the Galling Reflections of his own Guilty Mind; For not only the Consideration that he can enjoy his Pleasures *no longer*, but also that he has already Enjoyed them *too much*, will be Full of Bitterness to him. The Common Amusements of Wine and Good Company, whereby he once Diverted his Thoughts, and Lulled his Conscience Asleep, have now forsaken him, and in spite of all the Arts and Evasions, he makes use of it now raises its Voice, and calls Aloud for Vengeance. The Hurry and Business of the World, which sometimes threw him into a Senseless and Inconsiderate State, is All over, and he has Now time only to Behold his Vices with Trembling and Remorse. The seeming Distance of Eternity, and the Flourishing State of Health he has so long enjoyed; (the specious Arguments whereby the Sensual Man Deceives himself,) are Now severely Confuted, and his own Convictions assure him, tho' too late, that 'tis Ill trusting to a Death-Bed Repentance.

But, 3dly, That which does mostly Imbitter the Death of the Sensual Man, is the Dismal Apprehension

of

of a Future State. When he Reflects upon what he has Done, and Considers what he is like to Suffer; when he Observes That All Behind him is Guilt, and that All Before him is Destruction, what Damps and Shiverings do then shake his Affrighted Mind? How does he Tremble, and look Pale at the Consideration of a Future Judgment? The near Approach of Death presents him with a surprizing Scene of Fears and Dangers; of such Fears as he cannot overcome, of such Dangers as he can by no means avoid, and which indeed he is forced to Believe, tho' he is never so Unwilling to Believe them. For the Truth of it is, That no Man has so True a Prospect of *another* World, as he that is going out of *This*; for the Cares and Concerns of Life are apt to engage the Thoughts of the Best Men too far, much more the Desires of those, who have fixed their Hearts upon the Delights of it. But when the Relish of these worldly Enjoyments is taken off by Weakness and Infirmary, the Soul of Man, always an Active and Busy Principle, is wholly Conversant (for he has no other Thought to converse with) in the Thoughts of a Future State. But what Satisfaction, according to the best Principles of Reason and Revelation, can such a Consideration afford the Sensual Man? The Principles of *Natural Reason* convince him, That Virtue only entitles him to a Reward, and that there is a Natural Connexion between Sin and Punishment; and *Revelation* assures him how great this Punishment is; and his own Conscience falls in with the Evidence of *Scripture*, and convinces him, that this Punishment awaits him in another World. Go, ye Cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, is the

the Dreadful Sentence which his own Conviction applies to himself. But what Thought can Reach, or what Tongue can express the Terrors that afflict his Soul? The Torments of the Damned, no less than the Happiness of the Blessed, are Inconceivable; and the sad and sure Expectation of Punishment, is but one Remove from the Punishment it self.

As the Principal Reason why Men live sensually, and therefore die miserably is the Want of true Christian Courage and Resolution, in tamely giving way to the Allurements of Pleasure, and a great Want of Faith, in not enlarging their Prospect to Things that are Invisible; the only way for a Man to act suitably to the Dignity of Human Nature, and the Honour of the Christian Profession, is to Look beyond the Grave, to Believe what he cannot Comprehend, and to Resist with Vigour the Force and Power of his spiritual Enemies: For as his Courage and Resolution will carry him thro' all the Temptations of Flesh and Sense in this World, so will his Faith lead him into another; The One will enable him to be Steadfast, Unmoveable, and Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord; the Other Assuring him, That his Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; 1 Cor. xv. 58. The Christian Religion is a State of Warfare, Jesus Christ himself is called the Captain of his Salvation, the Enemies he Contends with are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, the Armour he is exhorted to put on, is the Breast-plate of Righteousness, the Sword of the Spirit, and the Shield of Faith; and Heaven it self is the Reward, when he Fights and Overcomes. What is there in all these Expressions that seems to favour and countenance an Idle and Unactive Life?

What

What rather, that does not alarm the whole Man, and summon his Bravest Resolutions, in *fighting the good Fight of Faith*? This is the Victory that triumphs not only over the World, but Death also. If a Man governs himself by a Firm Belief of Things Eternal, the Passive Duties of Christianity will never Terrify and Affright him; he will bring his Fleishly Appetites in Subjection to Reason and Faith, which at last shall be swallowed up in *Vision and Enjoyment*.

C H A P. XIII.

The Conclusion of the Whole ; or, the Sum and Substance of the Art of Dying well Consider'd, and Apply'd.

AS Religion is generally looked upon as a *Practical Science*, and the Truths of it are supported by Clear and Evident Principles, I think I may be fairly allowed to Argue from such Principles in the following manner: *The Pleasures and Afflictions of this Present Life are Light and Momentary ; the Delights and Sufferings of a Future State are Great and Infinite.* The only Inference, which by the Rules of Divine Philosophy, a Christian can draw from these Premises, is, That he ought to Act in Proportion to the Value of Things and to determine his Choice accordingly. A short Affliction is to be undergone with Patience in this World, for the Attainment of an endless Pleasure. It is much Better for him to forego a Transitory Pleasure in this Life, than to Forfeit an Infinity of Happiness in the Next. The Afflictions here are Rewarded with Future Glory, and all Worldly Delights do generally

rally end in Eternal Punishment, the Former are the most Eligible of the Two: And that there is as much Difference between the Pleasures and Sufferings of this and the next Life, as there is between Time and Eternity. These are the *Divine Maxims*, by which that Good Man governs himself who Contemplates his Latter End.

To learn therefore the *Art of Dying well*, with more Ease, and with more Dispatch, the best way is not so much to apply himself to *Books*, and *Discourses* on the Subject of Mortality, and the Uncertainty of Human Life, tho' such Instructions be of great Use and Advantage to him; but Frequently, and with great Intenseness of Thought to consider the Difference there is between Time and Eternity, and the great Disproportion there is between the Pleasures of *Sense*, and those of *Religion*; and this let him do, not to make himself more Ingenious, but more Holy; not to Increase his Knowledge, but to Improve his Virtue. And to Establish himself more Firmly in the Principles of Holy Living, let him Reflect also on the Examples of those who are now Dead; whether of Persons who have been Eminent for Holiness, and have therefore Dy'd in a State of Grace and Favour with God; or of such who have lived Wickedly, and have therefore Dy'd under the saddest Apprehensions of Futurity, and a Reasonable Fear of the Divine Displeasure. To ease my Reader of the Trouble of Searching for any Examples, I shall Produce from *Revelation* Three very Remarkeable Instances of his Kind; such as if duely Considered cannot fail to have the strongest Influence upon the Minds and Consciences of Men. The *First*, I shall mention is that of *Publick*

Persons, such who were Advanced to the Highest Post of Government. The *Second*, is what Relates to *Lay Persons* Consider'd in their *Private Capacity*. The *Third*, is the Example of such as were *Ministers* and *Stewards* of the Mysteries of God.

The *First Example* is: That of *Saul* and *David*. *Saul*, the first King of the *Jews*, when in a *Private Capacity*, and low Circumstances, was a Man of so Remarkable a Piety, that he was scarce exceeded by any. Upon his Advancement to the Regal Authority, he changed his Life with his Fortune, and Degenerated into a Profligate Sinner. He Persecuted Innocent *David*, even unto Death; and that for no other reason, but because he was Jealous that he would Succeed him in his Government. After a Reign of Twenty Years, he was Slain in Battle, and Dy'd a Miserable Death. *David* on the other hand, a Holy and a Just Man, being Declar'd King in his Room, Governed that People with equal Piety and Prudence, for the space of Forty Years; and after he had passed through a great Variety of Persecution, full of Years and Virtues, at last Dy'd in Peace, and in the Favour of God.

Let us now make the Comparison, between the Comforts and the Sufferings of these two Honourable Princes, and see, which of them had Learnt the Art of Holy Living and Dying, to the best Advantage. The Pleasure of Governing, a Pleasure which the Ambition of Men does mostly Affect, was in a great measure abated, by that Inveteracy where with he Persecuted *David*. This Mixture of Malice, and Pleasure was all he could pretend to, while he Lived in this World. What Succeeded; was all Pain without any Mixture of Delight;

light; Endless, and Excessive Torment without any Hopes of Redress. His Soul, the more Noble Part of him, has now for Two Thousand Years, and upwards, layn under the most Inexpressible Pains; Pains that are Intolerable for a Moment, and yet such as must be born to all Eternity. The Case of *David* is far otherwise; in the Course of a Life of Seventy Years, tho' his Sufferings were Great, and his Afflictions Many, yet the Refreshments of Conscience, and his Spiritual Complacencies fortify'd his mind amidst all his Difficulties; of which he has Cheerfully assur'd us in his *Psalms* of Praise and Thanksgiving. A Life so Regular, so Uniform as this, was at last Crown'd with an Unmeasurable Duration of Happiness, with the Blessed Society of Angels and God, and the Delightful Prospect of a Blessed Eternity to come.

The Reader may learn from hence, that neither the Greatness, nor Goodness, nor Wickedness of Men can secure them from the Grave; That no Man is so High as to be above giving an Account to God of all his Actions, and That it is worth while for Men in the most Eminent Stations to Live well, only that they may Dye so. For what Comparison is there between a Transient Pleasure, and an Eternal Punishment? Who would wish to enjoy the most Pure Unmingled Delights, without the least Interruption, for the whole Compass of Life, provided nothing was to follow, but *Unquenchable Fire*? If a Man duly considers the Eternity of Hell-Torments, the Amazing Thought is sufficient to Soften the most Obdurate Heart, and melt it down into Contrition and Repentance; for altho' a Consideration of the Joys of Heaven, and of the Love and Goodness of God to Man-

kind, may sometimes engage Men in a Filial Obedience to him; yet there is nothing which strikes so Powerfully upon the Conscience of a Wealthy and Honourable Sinner, who has greater Power, and lays under greater Temptations to do Evil, as the *Terrour of Damnation*. *Knowing therefore this Terrour of the Lord, I would Perswade Men;* I would Perswade them with all the Force of Divine Eloquence to look beyond the Grave, to the last Issue and Consequence of Things; for this Reason I would Advise, I would Entreat, I would Beseech them to be Happy. How often does God warn them by the Exemplary of Lives of Good Men, and by the Punishment of the Wicked? How does he Call upon them by Sickness and Diseases, by Graves and Monuments, by Death and Judgment, by Heaven and Hell, to mind *the Things that belong to their Peace, before they are hid from their Eyes.*

The next Example I shall Mention is: That of the *Rich Man*, and *Lazarus*; which Relates to every Man in his *Private Capacity*, and which indeed as it is the Case of all the *Laity*, from the Creation either in this or the next World. The *Rich Man*, tho' his Pleasures were but Short, continually Pamper'd himself with high feeding, and Lived up to the height of Luxury and Ease. He spared no Expences in his Treats, and Entertainments, and made as great a Figure in Dress and Equipage as possible. *He was clothed in Purple, and fine Linen, and fared Sumptuously every Day.* The *Beggar* was as Remarkable for his Poverty, as the *Other* was for his Abundance. His Body was doubly Afflicted with Pain and Hunger, his Soul almost quite sunk with the Fears of Starving, and all the Relief he had was

was only from the *Dogs*, tho' more Compassionate than their Master. But see the surprizing Change, which Death makes in the Conditions of Men! The *Rich Man* Dies and Descends, with all his Vices about him, into Hell; *Lazarus* also Dies; but is *carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom*. The *Rich Man*, after a Short Life of Ease and Pleasure, entred into a State of Eternal Punishment; the Pious and Patient *Lazarus*, after a short Affliction which was but for a Moment, does now Enjoy a far more exceeding, and Eternal Weight of Glory. The Opinion we conceive of the Happiness of others is generally False. We are apt to Form a Judgment of the Happiness of Men in this World, from a Consideration of the Honours, or Riches, or Pleasures they Enjoy, or the Favour and Countenance of This, or That great Man; whereas we ought rather to take an Estimate of them from their Virtues, their Moral Accomplishments, and those Excellent Dispositions of Soul, which alone Qualify them for the Enjoyment of Heavenly Glory. It is not Improbable, that if we, who are now Alive, had lived in the time of these Men, that most, if not all of us, had over-looked the Prospect of a Future State, and rather desired the Happiness of the One, than the Miserable Poverty of the other; but now we see, and are Convinced, that the Condition of these Men is quite Reversed; That Luxury and Intemperance, is now receiving its Punishment in the Regions of Despair, whilst Afflicted Piety Exalts its head with Triumph in the *Heavenly Jerusalem*. We have now Different Views of Things, and can Distinguish between the Means which lead to our Happiness, and such as really Prevent it. Why therefore in this time of Probation,

bation, when we have a Convenient Opportunity to make the best Choice; When we Observe from the Rewards, and Punishments of others, what our own Condition is like to be; I say why do not these Examples Excite us a Holy Emulation of attaining to those Rewards which some of them do now Enjoy, and a Religious Dread of those Punishments which others do now Suffer? I do not hereby Perswade Men to a Moapish Austerity, and an Entire Aversion to such Things, as God has been pleased to Create for the use of Man. The Innocent Enjoyments of Life do in some Respects qualify Men for the Offices of Christianity; and there is no Inconsistency between Religion and Affluence. Nay, it is very certain, that a Man is more Capable, by a Large Income, and a Considerable Estate, to be more Useful and Beneficent to Mankind, than he would otherwise be. But it is One Thing for a Rich Man to be Charitable, and another to be Luxurious; The Great Examples of *Abraham*, of *David*, of *Job* are a Sufficient Direction to a Rich Man, in the Management of a Large Fortune. These Holy Men amidst all their Abundance, retain'd only a Competency for Themselves: Nay, indeed they retrenched Themselves, that they might have to give to the Necessities of others; and preserved at the same time their Innocence, and their Charity too.

The Consideration of this Example on the other Hand, ought to be a Great Consolation to Poor Men; viz. That their Poverty itself is no ways Criminal; Nay, that it is in many respects a Security to them against those Temptations, to which the Rich are most exposed. It Instructs them farther that the Happiness of Men is not to be Measured

Measured by any Outward Circumstances of Life and Fortune in this World, That they have as Good a Title to a more Lasting Inheritance as the Rich Man has; And *Lastly*, That the Afflictions which they now Suffer, if they bear them with Patience and Resignation, will at last be Rewarded with Fullness of Joy. In short this Example both of the *Rich Man*, and the *Beggar*, and the Different State of Rewards and Punishments they now are in, will Convince all Mankind of this Important Truth; *That only the Righteous Man can Dye Happily.* The Natural Fears of Death, to which we are all Subject, the Impartial Voice of our own Consciences, and the Testimony of the Holy *Scripture* do Constantly repeat the Evidence of it upon our Minds. What then can be the Reason, That Men should thus act against Light and Conviction? Why indeed the Principal Reason is; That the Contemplation of Death is too Melancholy a Thought; it is apt to Rouse the Conscience a little, to Disturb them in their Pleasures, and to Sour the Enjoyments of Life. These, it is to be feared, are generally the Thoughts of Rich Men, who are apt to Flatter Themselves, by reason of their Superiour Fortune, That God has Indulged them in a Greater Latitude of Life than other Men; And therefore that they are not so strictly tyed up to the Obligations of Religion and Conscience. But these Men would do well to Consider, That no Difference in the Outward Circumstances of Life can Vacate the Obligations of Duty; And that as they are entrusted by Providence, with Great Powers of doing good, than other Men, a greater Improvement of those Talents which they have Received, is Expected from them.

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The Last Example of the Lives and Deaths of Good and Bad Men, which I shall now Produce is That of *Judas* and *Matthias*, which relates wholly to the *Clergy*; And the Consideration of it, may be great Use, and Advantage to them. The Case of *Judas* was Miserable beyond expression, inasmuch That he was neither Happy in This; nor in the other World. 'Tis true indeed that for the space of Three Years he continued in a Firm Obedience to his Lord and Master; but his Covetousness at last prevailing over his Duty, he Basely betrayed him. But what was the Consequence of this Treachery and Rebellion? The Devil who had Prompted him to so Flagrant a Wickedness, Punishes him for it. The Execrable Traytor falls into Despair, his Guilt obliges him to Return the Money he had received for his Treason; And his Guilt, and his Despair together make him his own Executioner; so that his Villainy at last Concluded with the Loss of this Temporal Life, and the Punishment of Eternal Death. This was the Reason why our Blessed Saviour Pronounced that Dreadful Sentence upon him; *That it had been Good for him, if he had not been Born*: Matt. 26. 24. The Behaviour of the Good *Matthias*, who succeeded him in his Apostleship, was far Different. His Courage was Equal to his Virtue, and neither the Prospect of Gain, nor the Fear of Danger, could draw him from a Steady Fidelity to his Lord. For tho' he laboured much in the Ministry, and suffered hard in the Discharge of it, yet as his Constancy and Resolution conquered all Difficulties, he now enjoys that Supreme Happiness, the Belief of which supported him under all the Calamities of this Life; And he Reigns Triumphantly with *Christ* in Heaven, whom

whom he Served Faithfully upon Earth. The Consideration of *These* Examples in the *Last* place, will be of Great Service to the *Clergy* in Engaging them to Live up to the Dignity of their *Ministerial Office*, That so they may Dye in the Fear and Favour of God,

And in Order to this; I would Exhort and Perswade them in the *First* place, to Abstract themselves, as much as Possible, from too Great a Familiarity with the World, and to Renounce as far as Human necessity will give them leave, all Covetous Desires of the Riches, Pleasures, Honours, and Preferments of it. A Good Clergyman is commanded to have no other Inheritance, Comparatively Speaking; but God only. O the Height and Eminency of *Sacerdotal Perfection*! Which Dies to the World, that it may Live unto God; which Disclaims all Right to the Creatures, that so it may entirely Possess the Infinite Creatour, and be Possessed by Him. This is the Sense of that Expression of the *Psalmist*; *The Lord Himself is the Portion of mine Inheritance, and of my Cup*; The meaning of which words is not; That God shall be one Part of his Inheritance, and the World another; but This; That as he has Consecrated himself by his *Ordination* to the Service of God, Whatsoever Pleasure or Profit the World may Flatter him with, he may enjoy them in God only, who is the Sufficiency of all Things. Whatsoever *Worldly Advantages* he has Renounced, or Dispised; or has given to the Poor, Thou O God hast carefully Layed up for him, and in thy own good time wilt Restore it to him; not in Things Corruptible, but in Thyself, who art the Inexhaustible Fountain of all Good: This also is the Opinion of *St. Bernard* in his *Lives of the Clergy*. A Clergyman,

says he, who serves the Church of Christ, ought to Consider from whence his Name is Derived, and to Answer the Dignity of his Character. They are therefore called Clergymen, because They are of the Inheritance of the Lord, or because the Lord is Their Inheritance. Now he who Inherits the Lord, or whom the Lord Inherits, ought to Behave himself in so Devout a Manner, as equally to Possess, and be Possessed by him.

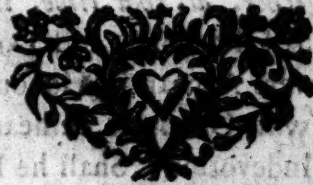
The next Duty of a Good Minister of Jesus Christ, in order to a Happy Death, is, To Live an Innocent and Useful Life; or in St. Paul's words; To put on the new Man; which after God is Created in Righteousness, and true Holiness. Eph. 4. 24. It is not only Necessary for him, to Renounce the World, but also to Live Above it. To put on the New Man is a Phrase used by the Apostle to Signify our Imitation of Christ, in Opposition to another Expression in Scripture of Putting off the Old Man; that is, Adam, who Transgressed, and therefore Fell. To be Created in Righteousness and true Holiness, is not only to live up to the Principles of Justice, and Moral Honesty; but also to Excel in the Highest Perfection of Christian Obedience, and to Conform himself, as near as he can, to the Image of his Master, Who did no Sin, neither was any guile found in his Mouth. 1 Pet. 2. 22.

The Last Duty of a Good Minister of Jesus Christ in Order to a Happy Death, is; To Behave himself in all, the Offices of his Holy Profession, not only with Decence and Gravity; but also with Diligence and Devotion, and a Religious Fervour of Mind. I shall only mention at present the Holy Eucharist, as being the most Venerable Office of the Christian Religion; Is it therefore

fore to be Performed in a Cold, a Careless, Unattentive Manner? The Immaculate Lamb of God is there Spiritually offered; with what Angelical Purity, with what Humble Reverence therefore ought the Holy Sacrificer to be Cloathed, who Presents the Offering? See what Awful Sentiments St. Chrysostom, in his Book of the Priesthood had of the Solemnity of this Feast! In the time of Celebration, says he, *The Angels themselves Accompany the Priest, the Whole Order of the Heavenly Powers are in Extacy, and the Altar is Filled with the Praises of the Heavenly Host.* St. Gregory, no less Seraphically Expresses himself to the same Purpose. *What Christian, says he, can doubt, whether the Heavens open, in the Consecration of the Elements, at the Voice of the Priest? Whether the Angelic Chour do not attend the Service? Nay, Whether Heaven and Earth, Things Visible and Invisible are not United together, at that time, in Harmony and Praise?* What! Shall Thrones, and Dominions, Principalities, and Powers Appear in Honour of this Sacrifice, and shall he who Officiates demean himself with Indifference, and Indevotion? Shall he Hurry over the Holy Office of the Church in a Thoughtless Inconsiderate Manner? This is to Mock God, to bring a Contempt on Holy Things, and to give occasion to Licentious Men to Blaspheme.

This therefore, upon the whole, is the most Religious Exercise of Reason in all Orders and Distinctions of Men, and What indeed will have the Strongest Influence upon them in their Improvement in the Art of Dying well; namely to Distinguish between the Pleasures of Earth and Heaven; To Look beyond the Grave, and to Live in a Constant Contemplation of Things Invisible.

For the Apostles Reasoning, with which I shall Conclude, will always hold Good, and the Death of the Righteous Man will Convince him of the Truth of it, viz. *That our Light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, will work for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory; While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; For the Things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal.*



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PRAYERS

Preparatory to a Happy Death;
To be used in the Time of
Health.



A Prayer for a Holy and Virtuous Life.



Almighty God the Fountain of all Grace;
and the Author of all Holiness, who by
Thy Divine Spirit dost Guide, Direct,
and Sanctify The Hearts of Thy Faithful
People; do Thou excite in me such a Lively and
Active Sense of thy Love towards me, as may pro-
voke me to Love Thee above all Things. Inspire
my Soul with such an awful Reverence of Thy Ma-
jesty, as may make me Fearful to offend Thee;
with

with such a Firm Belief of Thy Providence as may always Encourage me to Trust and Confide in Thee; with such lasting Impressions of Thy Mercy and Goodness towards me, as may Convince me that all Return of Duty, Gratitude, and Obedience, are due unto Thee. Grant that I may Devote that Life, which Thou hast given me, entirely to Thy Service; that so my Will may be Conformable to Thine in all Things; and that I may Purify myself, even as Thou art Pure. Give me Grace Constantly to follow the Blessed Example of Thy Son Jesus Christ, that so I myself may be an Example to others, in all Holy Conversation and Godliness. Let not the Present State of Health I now enjoy, nor the seeming Distance of Eternity, make me Careless and Negligent in Providing for my Last Hour; but Give me Strength and Resolution, not only to Consecrate the First-Fruits of my Age to thy Glory, but to Continue Always in well-doing; That so my whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, may be presented Blameless at the Coming of Thy Blessed Son, My Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

A Prayer

*A Prayer for a Contempt of the World.*

O Holy and most Merciful Saviour, who hast Taught me both by Thy Precept and by Thy Example, That I must Dye to the World, if I would Live unto Thee; Convince me by thy Enlightning Grace, how Empty and Insufficient all worldly Enjoyments are, to fill the Desires of an Immortal Soul. Let not the Splendour of Greatness, nor the Allurements of Pleasure, nor the Delights of Sense, nor the Love of Riches ever so far Prevail upon me, as to separate me from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. And that I may neither Love the World, nor the Things that are in the World, Enable me by thy Grace to Aspire after Heavenly and more Lasting Satisfaction; That so Raising my Thoughts and Desires above the World, all my Affections may Unite in Thee, who art the Fulness of all Things. Let the Vanity and Unsatisfactoriness of all Earthly Pleasure Instruct me, that thou didst originally create me for a more Glorious Inheritance; and let a Sense of that Shame, and Remorse which flow from an Excessive

Excessive Love of this World, make me Thoughtless and Indifferent as to the Enjoyment of it. Grant, O thou Blessed Saviour of Mankind, That I may follow Thy great Example of Mortification and Self-Denial in all Things; that so living by Faith, and not by Sight, and denying myself the Pleasures of this Life, I may at last Inherit those Pleasures which shall last always. I humbly request This for thy Merits, and thy Mercies sake. *Amen.*



A Prayer for Improvement in the Three Christian Graces, of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

O Infinitely Holy, and All-knowing God, who with so much Wisdom hast Contriv'd Thy Holy Religion, as to make it a State of Improvement, and hast therefore commanded me to Grow in Grace; Grant, that in Obedience to Thy Command, I may constantly exercise myself in the Practice of all Christian Duties, even to the Highest Measures and Degrees of Them. And because Thou hast assur'd me, That without Faith it is Impossible to Please Thee, Give me such a Measure of This Grace; That

That I may submit my my Reason to thy Word,
That so, where I cannot Comprehend, I may Adore
Thy Infinite Wisdom. And that my Faith in Thee
and Thy Holy Word may not rest only in my Un-
derstanding, but may reach my Will and Affections
also; Do thou enable me to Actuate and Enliven it
with Love, and with Good Works; That I may
at last Attain to the End of my Faith, even the
Salvation of my Soul. And Because Thou O God,
by reason of the All-sufficiency of Thy Nature, art
the Only Hope of all the Ends of the Earth,
Grant that I may not only Believe in Thee, but
may also Trust, and securely rest upon Thee; That
so, whether it be in Prosperity or Adversity, whe-
ther in Life, or Sicknes, or Death, I may firmly
Depend on thy Providence Here, and the Enjoy-
ment of thy Presence Hereafter. And since thou
hast been pleas'd to set so High a Value upon the
Duty of Charity, as to give it the Preference even
to Faith and Hope, Inspire my Soul, O God, with
such an Ardent and so Hearty an Affection to-
wards Thee, that I may Love Thee Principally for
Thine own Sake, that so my Love to Thee may not
Proceed from a sense of Interest, but Duty. And that
I may express my Love to Thee by such Instances of
it, as are most Beloved by Thee, Grant that I may

Exercise all the Offices of Love, of Tenderneſs, and Affection to others; that ſo Increaſing Daily in a State of Grace, I may at laſt arrive to a State of Glory, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*



A Prayer for Watchfulneſs, and a Due Preparation to meet our Lord at the Time of Death.

Only Infinite and Eternal God, who by Daily Spectacles of Mortality doſt Convince me; That there is nothing more Certain than Death, and nothing more Uncertain than the hour of Death; Give me Grace to Improve theſe Holy Thoughts to thoſe Religious Purpoſes which Thou intendeſt by them; That ſo from a Conſideration of the Death of others I may Learn how Frail and Uncertain my own Condition is, and from a Conſideration of the Uncertainty of my own Death, I may Live in a Conſtant Preparation for it. And becauſe I know neither the Day nor the Hour when the Son of Man cometh, Grant that I may always Watch according to his Command, that when He cometh he may find me ſo Doing. But becauſe thoſe Duties are moſt Acceptable to Thee, which are moſt Voluntary and Free; Aſſiſt me, Good God, with
thy

thy Holy Spirit, that so I may Begin and Continue and Finish this Great Work when my Health shall best enable me to perform it; That so my Obedience may not appear to be an Act of Necessity and Fear, but of Choice and Love. And forasmuch as the Cares and Pleasures, and Diversions, of this World, are apt to make me Unmindful of that Great Change, I must shortly undergo, Grant that by a Religious Solitude, and a Seasonable Retirement from it, I may always Live in a Constant Thought of Dying; that whether I Live, I may Live unto the Lord, or whether I dye, I may Dye unto the Lord; so that whether Living or Dying I I may be Thine; through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.
Amen.

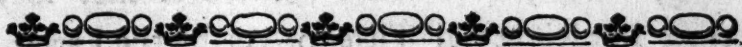


A Prayer for Beneficence, and the Right Disposal of all Worldly Riches.

O God who art the Great Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth, and from whom therefore all Good Things do come; Give me Grace to make a Right Use of all those Gifts and Blessings, whether Spiritual or Temporal, which Thou hast Bestowed upon me. In a Particular Manner Dispose my Heart, freely to Give to others, a Reasonable Share, of what I have freely Received from Thee.

To this Purpose, Grant that I may look upon my self as having no Right in Those Riches I now possess, but only as Thy Steward and Dispenser of them. And as Thou by Virtue of that Absolute Property Thou hast in all Things, hast been pleas'd, by the Laws of Charity, to assign our Superfluities to the Poor and Needy ; Let me always Consider, That I cannot without Injury and Injustice withhold them from Them. And that I may supply the Wants of others, with Cheerfulness and a Free Spirit, give me a Feeling Sense of all their Wants and Afflictions ; That I may Proportion my Charity to the Greatness of their Necessities, Teach me to Retrench my own Appetites, and to Moderate my Desires, that so neither the Expensive Demands of Pride, Luxury, or Pleasure, may ever disable me for Providing for Them. And as a Fresh Obligation to that Assistance and Compassion which both by the Laws of God and Nature they are Entitled to ; Grant that I may effectually consider Them in all the Different Relations they bear to me, whether as Men, or Christians, Relations, or Friends ; that so I may adjust my Charity to the Different Exigencies of all men. Preserve me by thy Good Providence from all Hatred and Malice, even to my most Implacable Enemies, that I may

not look upon their Difaffection to me, as any Just Cause for Cruelty and Unmercifulness in myself, That so my Mercy to others may be Return'd in the Pardon and Forgiveness of my own Sins thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*



A Prayer for Piety towards God, Justice towards our Neighbour, and Temperance in Ourselves.

O All-Powerful, All-Merciful, and All-Glorious Lord God, who by the Perfections of Thy Own Nature, and thy Beneficence to Men, art Entitled to the Highest Praise, and Most Humble Adoration, Possess my Soul with such an Awful Reverence of thy Majesty, when I Address myself to Thee, that I may Behave myself in Thy Presence with all Those Devout Disposition of Soul, which are due from a sinful Creature to his most Holy Creator. Let the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart be always Acceptable in Thy Sight, O Lord my Strength and my Redeemer! And since I cannot offer my Devotions with any Prospect of Success to Success to thee, unless I do
Justice

Justice to others; Grant that I may Consider the Obligations, I lay under of Fulfilling the Great Law of Equity, in Doing to Others whatsoever I myself would Desire They should Do unto me; That so I may not Over-reach, or Go beyond Them in any Thing, but may Give Them whatsoever they may have a Just Right and Title to, As by the Laws of Christian Charity, they have a Right to my Good Opinion of them, to Truth and Sincerity in all my Expressions to them, and to an Honest and Conscientious Usage in all my Dealings with them; O let me Think, and Speak, and Act by them with an Universal Integrity and Justice. Let not too severe a Prosecution of my Own Right make me to Invade Theirs; That so I may no way Injure them, under a false Pretence of Doing Justice to myself; And Because Thou hast been pleas'd to Prescribe the Duty of Temperance to Ourselves, as well as of Justice to Others, Grant that I may make Use of all the Necessaries of Life to those Ends and Purposes only, for which Thou didst first Create them, and Bestow them on me; That so I may live up to the Strictest Rules of Decency and Moderation in the Enjoyment of them, and may not abase the Dignity of my Nature by Intemperance and Excess; Let the Obligations I lay under of Preserving my Health, prevent me
from

from the Use of Such Means, as would Effectually Destroy it. And that I may keep my Body in Sobriety and Chastity, give me Grace to Mortify and Subdue all the Inordinate Desires of the Flesh by a Regular and Sober Life; That so my Flesh being entirely brought in Subjection to the Spirit, I may always obey Thy Godly Motions in Righteousness and true Holiness, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*



A Prayer for all Holy Affections in the Exercise of Devotion.

O Infinitely Holy, Wise; and most Merciful Father, who hast been pleased to InSTITUTE the Duty of Prayer, as the Ordinary Means of Obtaining all those Spiritual and Temporal Blessings I have occasion for, Do Thou Possess my Soul with Such a Reverential Awe of thy Excellence, when I Address myself to Thee, as comports with the Dignity of Thy Nature, and Thy Beneficence to me. O Let me always Trust in Thy Infinite Wisdom which Knows all my Necessities, and in Thy Infinite Power, and Extensive Goodness which is Able, and Willing to Relieve them. Let a Just Sense of the Great Honour vouchsafed to me, in
Permitting

Permitting me to Open my Wants Before Thee, Excite in me all those Devout Affections, without which, I cannot with any Success Present my Supplications unto Thee. That I may Obtain the Remission of my Own Sins, Grant that I may always Pray to Thee with such a Charitable Disposition of Mind as is Ready and Willing to Forgive the Offences of Others. Let the Consideration of thy Greatness, Affect me with such an Humble Opinion of myself, as may Convince me of The Great Distance there is Between the Creatour and the Creature; That so I may not Trust in mine own Righteousness in The Grant of my Prayers, but in Thy Mercy and Kindness to me. Inspire my Soul with such a Firm Belief of thy Good Providence, as may Inspirited and Inflamm all my Devotions to Thee with Fervency and Zeal. And that I may not make my Requests to Thee, for what may be Superfluous, Inconvenient, or Prejudicial to me, do Thou Enlighten my Understanding, That so I may Know what is Reasonable for me to Ask, and Worthy of Thee to Give. And that I may Obtain a Full supply of all my Temporal Necessities, Grant that I may First seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, That so all Those things may be added unto me. Accept These Petitions, and Confirm them O Heavenly Father for the sake of thy Son *Jesus Christ.*

A Prayer.

A Prayer for Abstinence, or the Right Performance of the Duty of Fasting.

O God who has commanded me to Present my Body, a Living Sacrifice, Holy, Acceptable unto Thee, and who by the Example of thy Blessed Son Jesus Christ hast Instructed me to Humble my Soul with Fasting; That I may Exercise myself in a Constant Meditation upon Heaven, and Heavenly Things, and may bring my Fleshly Appetites in Subjection to the Spirit, Give me Grace to Use such Abstinence, that I may always Obey thy Godly Motions in Righteousness and True Holiness. And that I may never Displease Thee by any Acts of Intemperance, and Excess, let me always Govern myself by such a severe Exercise of Mortification, and Self-Denial, as may Kill and Subdue all Vices in me; That I may also Perform this Duty in such a Manner as may be most Acceptable to Thee; Let no Affectation of Popularity and Vain-Glory; but an Humble Sense of my own Unworthiness always Excite me to it. And That my Fasting may more Effectually Recommend itself to Thee, let it be always Attended with the Offices of Prayer and Devotion,

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and

and a Deep Humiliation for all my Offences against Thee; That so Afflicting myself Here, I may Rejoyce with Thee Hereafter, and my Fasting in This World may be a Religious Means of Feasting with Thee in Thy Heavenly Kingdome through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*



A Prayer for a Charitable and Compassionate Temper of Mind.

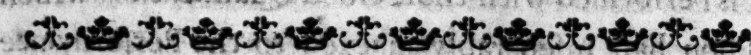
O Holy and most Merciful God, who so Highly Regardest the Duty of Charity, as to make the Final Sentence of the Last Judgment to depend upon it, and hast been pleased to Recommend it not only from a Consideration of the Wants of others, but also from those Tender Principles of Pity, and Affection thou hast Implanted in all Men, Preserve me always by thy Holy Spirit from all Inclemency and Hardness of Heart; that so I may never Overlook the Miseries and Afflictions of Those, whom Thou art pleased to vizeit with Want or Trouble. Let a Sense of Thy Compassion to me, in the Forgiveness of my Sins, move me to a Tender Compassion to others, in the Relief of their Necessities. And Because no Duty is Acceptable to Thee; unless

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it is Performed with those Good Qualifications which Thou hast Inseparably annexed to the Performance of it; Let a sincere Love of Thee, and a willing Obedience to Thy Commands, engage me to an Affectionate Concern for the Wellfare of others. That I may Supply their Wants with the greatest Advantage to Themselves, let me always Express my Charity to Them, in the most Seasonable manner; that so they may Receive my Assistance, when they have most Occasion for it. In the Distribution of my Charity, let the Consideration of thy Bounty and Munificence to me, Enlarge my Heart; that my Compassion may Rise up to the Measure of their Wants; That so making to myself Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, they may at last receive me into Everlasting Habitations. These Petitions I Beseech Thee to Hear, and to Accept through the Merits and Meditation of thy Blessed Son *Christ Jesus.* Amen.

H h 2

A Prayer



*A Prayer to God for his Assistance in a
Religious Watchfulness over our Senses,
and a Due Regulation of them.*

O Almighty God, and Heavenly Father, who did'st Originally Create all the Powers both of my Soul and Body, for Thy Service ; That my Outward Senses may no way prove the Instruments of conveying any Thing which is Impure into my Soul, Grant that I may always keep them in a Due Subserviency to those Laws, which Thou hast been pleased to Prescribe for the Government of them, and a Regular Fixedness to Those Objects which Thou hast Appointed for Them. That I may not engage my Affections too far in any Unlawful Desires of the Flesh, Grant that I may make a Covenant with my Eyes, that they may never lead me into the Defilements of Incontinency and Lust. Let the Contemplation of the Beauty and Comeliness of all Created Beings, Excite in me the Purest Flames of Divine Love to Thee Only, the most Amiable Fountain of all Beauty, and Perfection. And least the Evil Conversation of others should have any Influence upon me in my Sense of Hearing, Grant I
may

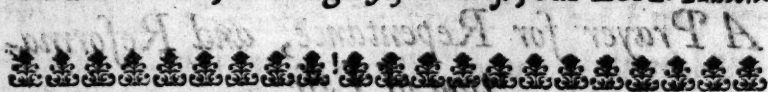
that I may Constantly avoid the Acquaintance of Those Men, who by Prophane and Atheistical Discourse, by Calumny and Reflection, or any other way of Evil-Speaking, shall offend against Thee their God, their Neighbour, or Themselves. And since Thou wast Pleased to Create This Sense for many Holy and Religious Purposes, to Answer Thy Intentions therein, Grant that I may Constantly Employ myself in Hearing and Receiving Thy Holy Word; and in taking care, That I Hear it, with Reverence and Attention. These Petitions, I Heartily beg, may be Accepted through the Intercession of *Jesus Christ* the Righteous. *Amen.*



A Prayer for Repentance, and Reformation of Life.

O Heavenly Father, who art so Kind, and Compassionate to the Souls of Men, as to Accept of their Repentance, as the Condition of thy Forgiveness; Give me a Deep and an Afflicting Sense of all my Sins; of all the Circumstances and Aggravations of them; and of the Great Danger to which they expose me; That so my Repentance may Rise in Proportion to my Guilt, and that
Thy

Thy Mercy may Exceed my Guilt, and my Repentance also, in the Pardon of them. Let the Consideration of Thy Bounty and Beneficence to me, Awaken me into a Thorough Compunction for my Ingratitude to Thee. That I may truly Repent me of my Sins Grant that I may Effectually Reform my Life; That I may with Success Confess them to Thee, give me Grace to Forsake them also. To this end Empower me, by thy Divine Assistance to Conquer all those Vicious Habits, and Inclinations which Separate between me, and my God. Let a Serious Reflection on those Inconceivable Pains, and Agonies Thou was pleased to Suffer for my Sins, lead me into Abhorrence of them; That as Thou wast pleased to Offer up Thyself for me, so by Forsaking them, I may wholly offer up my self unto Thee, Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



A Thanksgiving to God, for our Admission into the Christian Church, by Baptism.

MY Soul, O God, is Filled with Thy Praise, in that Thou hast Adopted me by Christian Baptism into a Sonship to Thee, and hast made me an Heir of Thy Kingdom. I Behold with Gratitude and

and Joy, the Glorious Priviledges I am Entitled to. I am now a Member of that Church, which Christ himself hath Purchased with his own Blood; O let me Express my Highest Acknowledgments for so Inestimable a Mercy, in Being like That Church; Holy, and without Blemish. I Believe, O God, all the Incomprehensible Misteries of the Christian Faith; Grant that I may always shew forth thy Praise for so Beneficial a Revelation, by a Life Agreeable to the Belief of Them. Thou hast Cleansed me, O Merciful Father, and hast Purified me by Baptism, from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, let me Return my Gratitude to Thee, in Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. Since I have been Wash'd, Since I have been Sanctify'd, Since I have been Justify'd in the Name, and by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, I will Offer up my Thankfulness to Thee in my Conformity to Him; That as I am Bury'd with Christ through Baptism unto Death, even so I also may Rise with Him, and Walk in Newness of Life, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer



A Prayer for Grace and Strength, to Perform the Promises we Renew'd in our own Names, at Confirmation.

O Heavenly Father, Equal in Power, and Wisdom, and Holiness, as thou hast been pleas'd to Enlighten my Understanding with a Perfect Knowledge of that Vow and Covenant, which was made in my Name, at my Baptism; Confirm and Strengthen me with Might, by Thy Spirit, in the Inner Man, that I may Execute, what I have so Solemnly Promised, with Firmness and Resolution. To this Purpose Do Thou Enable me by the Power of Thy Grace, Manfully to Fight under Christ's Banner, in Opposition to all the Force and Strength of my Spiritual Enemies. Grant That I may make my Engagements Good to Thee, in a Steady and Unchangeable Belief of all the Articles of thy Holy Religion, That so I may Believe Them, because Thou hast Revealed them, and may esteem the Belief of Them, as the only Foundation of a Good Life. And That my Faith in Thy Word may be Actuated by Love and by Good Works, Empower me, with Farther Measures of thy Spirit, to Pay
an

an Universal Obedience to all Thy Commands, and
Constantly Persevere in Them; That so having my
Fruit unto Holiness, my End may be, Everlasting
Life, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



*A Prayer Preparatory to the Holy Com-
munion.*

O Blessed Jesus, who did'st Suffer Death upon
the Cross, that Thou mightest Save all Men,
and Invite me to Celebrate the Remembrance of
thy Death and Passion; Give me Grace to Ap-
proach thy Presence, in this Holy Feast, with that
Awe and Reverence, and Devotion to Thee, as
thereby to Receive all the Spiritual Advantages of
Thy Inconceivable Sufferings for me. Make me a
Clean Heart, O God, and Renew a Right Spirit
within me. Cast me not away from Thy Presence,
and Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Let a
Sense of Thy Infinite Goodness to me, in the Sa-
crifice of Thyself, and of Thy Inexpressible Love
to me, in Accomplishing the Great Work of my
Redemption, excite in me a Holy Contrition for all
my Sins, and a Firm Resolution against them. In-
crease and Improve in me such a Lively and Ac-
tive Faith as Thou Requirest in All those who come

to Thy Holy Table. Let not my Hatred, or Anger, or Malice to Others Prevent the Blessed Efficacy of This Holy Sacrament on myself; nor my Unthankfulness to Thee for so Inestimable Love to me, deprive me of the Benefits of so Valuable a Propitiation; That so Receiving these Holy Mysteries in such a Manner as is Acceptable to Thee, I may Obtain a Full Pardon of all my Sins, and be Filled with Thy Grace, and Heavenly Blessing, Through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*



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PRAYERS

Preparatory to a Happy Death;
To be used in the Time of
Sickness.

*A Prayer for a Good Improvement of the
Consideration of Death.*



Merciful and Blessed Lord God, who art
the Author of Life, and Death; I now
Daily Perceive my Indisposition to En-
crease, and the Pains of Death to Take hold upon
me; O spare me a little that I may Recover my
Strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen.
I am now fully Convinc'd, I Hope not too late Con-

vinc'd, of the Vanity and Emptiness of all Worldly Pleasures; O Dispose my Soul, I Earnestly Beseech Thee, to a Sincere Repentance, for all my Immoderate Enjoyments of them. I behold with Confusion of Thought, and with Trembling of Heart all my Past Transgressions, now setting themselves in Array against me; O do thou Awaken, tho' it be with Terroure, my Sleepy Conscience; and let me rather feel the Guilt of my Sins, than the Dreadful Punishment of them. Forgive me, O Heavenly Father, Forgive me my Sinful Compliances with the Fashionable Vices of this Wicked World, and all my Weakness and Cowardise in Resisting the Temptations of it; Forgive me the Ill use I have made of all those Mercies I have received from Thee. O Remember not the Sins and Offences of my Youth, but Think Thou upon me, O Lord, for Thy Goodness. Let me not Deceive myself by any Imaginary Hopes of a longer Continuance in This World, and thereby neglect the Present Opportunity of saying; Lord be Merciful to me a Sinner. Pardon, Good God, my Great Transgression, in not having made a Right use of the Time past in a Due Preparation for my latter End; and Grant, that a Thorough Conviction of my Negligence in so Doing may excite in me the most Active, and Vigorous

gorous Endeavours to make my Peace with Thee, before I leave this Present World. All this I beg for the sake of Him, who Died and Rose again for me, Thy Son *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

*A Prayer for a Good Improvement of the
Consideration of a Future Judgment.*

O Thou Sovereign Judge of the whole World; at whose Tribunal, and in whose Presence all Mankind must Appear, to give a Just Account of all their Thoughts, Words, and Actions, Grant that I may always Live under the Awful Influence of such an Awakening Consideration; That so I may not Dare to Do any Thing in Thy sight Here, for which I Know That Thou wilt surely Judge, and Punish me Hereafter: Let not the Seemingly Distributions of Thy Providence make to Distrust either Thy Wisdom, or Justice, Since Thou hast been Pleased to Appoint a Day, wherein these Differences shall be finally Adjusted before Thee, and the whole World. O Let my Conscience Rise up in Judgment against me in This Life, that Thou may'st not Condemn me in the next. That I may not be

be Judged by Thee, Grant that I may Judge of others, with Charity, and Truth. And Because it is impossible to Deceive Thee by any false Pretences to Piety and Holiness, let me always Act with that Openess and Sincerity in the whole Course of my Obedience to Thee, that I may not fear to Appear Before Thee with a Holy Confidence, and a Firm Assurance of Thy Favour. If the Malice of a Censorious and Ill-Natured World shall unjustly pass Sentence upon me, Give me Patience O God, to Bear their Reproaches, with an Eveness and Constancy of Mind, as being fully perswaded, that my Cause is to be Try'd again at thy Tribunal, and That the Judge of all the Earth will do me Right. I beseech Thee to hear these Petitions for the sake of thy Blessed Son Christ Jesus. Amen.

*A Prayer for a Good Improvement of the
Consideration of Hell Torments.*

O God, Infinitely Just and Powerful, who art a Consuming Fire to all Impenitent Sinners, Grant that the Fear of Thy Power, and a Religious Dread of thy Justice may Prevail strongly upon me in my Obedience to Thee ; That so I may neither

ther Tempt the One, nor Provoke the Other. Let a Constant Thought of the Greatness, and Duration of Eternal Punishment Quicken and Stir me up in my Utmost Endeavours to Avoid it; And that I may neither Sin against Thee, my Neighbour, or myself, let me never be Unmindful of the Dreadful Consequence of so Doing, that so by considering that the Wages of Sin is Death, I may have my Fruit unto Holiness, and my End may be Everlasting Life. Empower me to set loose to all the Pleasures of this World, that so my Delight may not end in Heaviness, and my Present Satisfactions, with Lamentation, and Mourning, and Woe. Direct me with a Spirit of Wisdom and Courage, that I may not incur the Fierceness of Thy Anger, to Gratify a Brutish Lust, or an Unreasonable Passion. That the Terroures of thy Threatnings may never be Executed upon me, Incline my Heart to Avert them by a Speedy and Sincere Repentance; That so when Death shall make a Separation of my Soul and Body, I may then Enter into the Joy of my Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

A Prayer

*A Prayer for a Good Improvement of the
Consideration of the Happiness of the
Blessed.*

O God who did'st Originally Form me for the
Enjoyment of Thyself, and hast therefore
Prepared for me such Joys as do equally Surpass my
Thoughts, as they Exceed my Admiration; Let
the Contemplation of the Nearness of so Great Hap-
piness Enable me to Pass thro' the Vale of Death
with Cheerfulness, and an Humble Resignation to
Thy Will. Let the Consideration of those Durable,
and Lasting Possessions, I shall enjoy in Heaven,
Disengage my Thoughts from those Riches I am
leaving Here; and the Expectation of that Fullness
of Joy, which is at Thy Right hand Dispose me to a
Willing Obedience in Parting with all the Pleasures of
Flesh and Sense. Let the Prospect of That Honour,
I shall be Advanced to in my Glorify'd Body, E-
strange my Affections and Desires from all Tempo-
ral Greatness. Unite my Soul to Thee, who art
the Fullness of all Happiness, by the Strongest Tyes
of Faith, Love and Obedience, that so at last I may
be more closely united to Thee in Vision, and En-
joyment.

joyment. My Soul is a Athirst for God, yea even for the Living God; when shall I come, and appear before the Presence of God? Make haste O Lord, Deliver me from all the Difficulties, and Troubles, and Temptations of this Mortal State; Even so Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. *Amen.*



A Prayer to God for this Direction in the Disposal of our Worldly Affairs.

O God, who of Thy Infinite Goodness, hast been so Bountiful to me, as to Bless me, in my Continuance in this World, with such a Sufficiency of Temporal Riches, as Enables me to be Beneficent, and Charitable to others; Direct me thy Good Spirit, to Dispose of what Thou hast Given according to such Rules of Prudence, Justice, and Compassion, as may most conduce to Thy Glory, and the Good of Mankind. If thro' Inadvertency, or Willfulness, I have any ways Injur'd, or Overreach'd my Neighbour, let me Discharge my Conscience of so Great a Guilt, that so I may Effectually make my Peace with Thee. Let a Spirit of Tenderneſs and Compassion move me to a Principal Regard to Those, who are most Nearly Related to

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me; and Grant, that I may take no Occasion from any former Unkindness on Their Part, to Break thro' the Obligations of Nature, and Dying in a State of Unmercifulness to Myself, in being Unmerciful to Them. Dispose my Heart also, O Thou Lover of Men, to a Brotherly Concern, and a Generous Supply of those whom I shall leave Behind me in Want or Trouble, as Fearing that I shall find Judgment without Mercy, if I shew no Mercy to Them. I beseech Thee to Avert This Judgment, for Thy Mercies sake. *Amen.*



*A Prayer for the Divine Assistance in a
Distinct Confession of all our Sins.*

O Eternal God, and most Merciful Father, who art Faithful and Just, in Forgiving all those who shall Confess their Sins unto Thee, Assist me with Thy Heavenly Grace, that I may Thankfully Perform the Condition, upon which Thou hast Promised so Great a Blessing to me. Enable me by Thy Spirit, in a Deep Sense of my Own Unworthiness in Provoking Thee, to Take the Whole Guilt of all my Sins upon myself; That so I may not plead the Prevalency of Nature, and the Power
of

of Temptation, as any Excuse or Extenuation of them. And that my Confession to Thee, may be more Availiable to my own Pardon, Grant that by an Universal Enquiry into the State of my own Conscience, I may Deal Impartially with myself in an Honest, and Humble Acknowledgement of every Known Sin, and all the Displeasing Circumstances, and Aggravations of it. Let not the Shame of my own Wickedness, nor the Fear of having Offended Thee, nor the Sorrow arising from a Sense of my Transgressions, ever Discourage me from so Necessary a Duty; that so by Confessing my Sins with Sorrow Here, I may be Rewarded in the Forgiveness of them, with Joy in Thy Heavenly Kingdom, Thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



A Prayer to God for our Worthy Receiving the Holy Sacrament.

O Thou Blessed Saviour of Mankind, at whose Table I am now Present, and before whose Awful Tribunal I must Shortly appear, do Thou Strengthen my Departing Soul with this Heavenly Entertainment in its way to Eternity, in all the

Agonies of its Dissolution. Let this Spiritual Banquet, in which my Saviour himself is Present, and by which the Memory of this Passion is Reviv'd in me, Replenish my Soul with Divine Grace, That so I may Behold and Receive with Faith this Holy Sacrifice, and it may be unto me an Earnest of that Holy Communion, which I desire to hold with Thee in Thy Kingdom. Do Thou Assure me hereby of thy Favour and Goodness towards me; and that I am Heir, thro' Hope, of that Everlasting Kingdom which Thou hast Purchas'd with Thy own Blood: Let Thy Grace Preserve me in This my Last hour, That so Thy Strength may be made Perfect in my Weakness. Grant that this Holy Commemoration of Thy Precious Death may be an Effectual Means of Preserving my Body and Soul unto Everlasting Life; That so from Conversing with Thee in These Outward Elements of Bread and Wine upon Earth, I may be fitly Prepar'd to Converse with Thee in Heaven, Thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



*A Prayer for Spiritual Strength in The
Resistance of Temptation.*

O God who art pleas'd to Exercise Mankind with many Difficulties and Temptations, for the Approvement of their Faith, their Integrity, their

their Patience, and their Courage, Permit me not to be Tempted above what I am able, but with the Temptation also make a way to escape, That I may be able to bear it. I Acknowledge, O Heavenly Father my own Weakness, and Insufficiency to Resist the Power of my Spiritual Enemies; do Thou Enable me by the Communications of thy Grace and Spirit to Overcome those Temptations, with which the Great Enemy of Souls may Try my Firmness to Thee; That so being Faithful unto Death, I may at last Obtain a Crown of Life. O Lord Most Holy, O God most Mighty, O Holy and most Merciful Saviour, Suffer me not, at my last hour, for any Pains of Death to Fall from Thee. Let the Soundness of my Faith, The Consideration of thy Mercy, and an Invincible Love of Thee, Prevail over all Temptations to Infidelity, Despair, or Hatred and Disaffection to Thee. That I may not give way, thro' Inadvertency, Weakness, or Weariness, to any Allurement of the World, the Flesh, or the Devil, to my own Watchfulness let me add my Supplications to Thee, O Blessed *Jesus*; That thou wouldst be Pleas'd to Lead me thro' all Dangers, and Support me in all Temptations for Thy Mercies sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer



*A Prayer for a Due Preparation against
Sudden Death.*

O God who hast Affured me in Thy Holy Word, that in the midst of Life I am in Death, Protect and Defend me by thy Good Providence from all the Casualties and Dangers to which I may be expos'd in This Mortal life. O let not the Number and Heinousness of my Sins Provoke Thee to Execute thy Judgments upon me in so Surprizing a Manner, as to Unqualify me for Thy Service; but Give me O most Merciful Father, Give me Time and Grace to make my Peace with Thee, and Reconcile myself to Thy Favour; that so I may go down to the Grave, in a Joyful Assurance of a Blessed Immortality. And Because I know neither the Day, nor the Hour when the Son of Man cometh, let a Sense of the Great Danger there is, in being Unprovided for a Future State, Engage me in a Constant Remembrance of my Departure hence; that so when I come to Dye, I may have Nothing to do but to Recommend my Soul into Thy Hands, as into the Hands of a Faithful Creator, and most Merciful Saviour. All This I humbly Desire of Thee, for the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

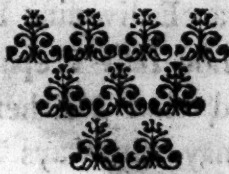
A Prayer

*A Prayer That we may Dye in Peace, and
in the Favour of God.*

O God who hast Commanded me to keep Innocency, That so at last I may enjoy Peace; That the Sense of my Guilt, and the Convictions of my Own Conscience may not Rise up in Judgment against me in the hour of Death; Let my Devotion, and Repentance Purify it from all those Offences, which may Displease Thee, or create any Uneasiness to my self; That so I may not Dye under the Fearful Apprehensions of Eternal Punishment, but in an Enlivening Hope of that Blessedness, which Thou hast Prepar'd for them that Love Thee. And that Neither the Fears, nor Pains of Death may any ways Prevent me from Looking up to Thee, and Continuing in a Steady Obedience unto Thee, ev'n unto the End; Grant that a Firm Belief of Thy Promises, and a Full Assurance of thy Favour may make me to Overlook whatsoever I may Suffer Here, because I shall Enjoy Thee Hereafter. These Devotions I Humbly Offer up in His name, and Conclude in His words, who Dy'd and Rose again for me, Saying, as He himself has Commanded me; *Our Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom*

Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is
in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And
forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that
trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom,
And the Power and the Glory, For ever and ever.
Amen.

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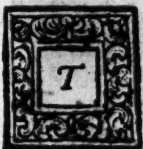
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